



# THE INDEPENDENT

Nº 3,280

FRIDAY 25 APRIL 1997

WEATHER: Some rain

(R45p) 40p



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AFTER  
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TABLOID: 10 PAGES OF MUSIC  
POP AND CLASSICAL

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## The truth about health



### Story behind Labour stunt

The NHS is what voters are talking about, while the parties trade insults and fantasy budgets. So what's the real outlook?

Steve Boggan

It was a simple Labour stunt designed to demonstrate Tony Blair's popularity with former Conservative voters – but behind it lay a truly devastating critique of the disintegration of the National Health Service.

The Labour leader was taken by his spin doctors yesterday to 69-year-old Elsie Butler's home to "canvass" her as a potential switcher. In fact, she had already decided to vote Labour but the untold story behind her change of allegiance will cause Tory strategists nightmares – she was angry at the appalling treatment meted out to her sick husband, Douglas.

Next Thursday, she says, is "payback time".

After Mr Blair had left her home in Morden, south London, unaware of her astonishing history, Mrs Butler told *The Independent* about the moment she lost faith in the Tories. For 30 years, she has been waging a battle against cancer, so has Mr Butler. They have each had their bowel and bladder removed. She has lost her womb and he has lost part of a lung.

Together, they have a unique view of three decades of NHS change. They say those 30 years represent a decline in patient care, culminating in Mrs Butler taking her husband from a filthy bed at the St Helier Hospital in Carshalton, south London – the hospital where John Major was born – to nurse him at home. "He had had his bladder removed and I saw him there in the hospital, lying in his own dirt, fading away and I vowed to get even," she said. "I felt like Dirty Harry with his Magnum 45. I wanted to point it at John Major and say 'Make my day'."

"Well now my day has come and it's payback time."

The Butlers describe the devotion of doctors and nurses at the Royal Marsden Hospital

and St Helier's as "magnificent". But they say cutbacks and the internal market have resulted in a deterioration of standards and apparent shortages in staff.

"I have voted Tory since 1979 but I don't believe the NHS will survive five more years of them," said Mrs Butler. "Things are getting worse. When I first started getting treatment, things were fine. But now there are mixed sex wards, not enough beds, dreadful shortages of nurses and appalling food."

"The treatment is so degrading. Can you imagine what it's like to be changing your tubes and things and turn round to find that there's a male patient there watching you on your ward? Why do we need mixed-sex wards?"

Mrs Butler began having doubts about voting Conservative after Mr Butler's bladder operation five years ago.

"I was appalled," she said. "He hadn't even been washed. He was lying there in his own dirt, with tubes everywhere and the nurses were simply too short staffed to care for him properly. He was fading away. It broke my heart. I had to clean him myself. I don't mind that, but I shouldn't have to."

Mr Butler, 69, a former BT engineer who has always voted Labour, said: "They lined up a place for me in a hospice and, basically, I was expected to die. But Elsie insisted on taking me home and nursed me back to health. I owe my life to her. There must be thousands of people like us all over the country. Well, now we plan to get our own back."

The couple are now healthy and optimistic, thanks, they say to their surgeon, Christopher Jones, although they say they are no longer sent hospital appointments. "They think we're past it," said Mr Butler.

Mrs Butler's decision to vote Labour was made only three months ago after being persuaded by her husband to attend a meeting at the Burn Bullock pub in Mitcham, where Tony Blair was addressing an audience of Tory waverers.

"I gave him a hard time," she said. "But I emerged convinced. He's sincere and I think I can trust him. At least you know he believes in the NHS."

Obvious to the Butlers' trials, Mr Blair left after sharing tea and biscuits with other switchers. After his departure, there was little doubt that his commitment to the NHS was sincere. Questions remain, however, over whether Labour can afford it.



Leap of faith: The Butlers can only trust that Labour will deliver

Photograph: David Rose

### The bigger picture

Jeremy Laurance  
Health Editor

Mr and Mrs Butler are not unique. Their experience of the health service is an example of the growing pressures on a system that is failing to cope. In spite of politicians' efforts to ignore it, the evidence from the doorsteps and from polling shows that the state of Britain's hospitals and medical services heads the voters' concerns.

They have good reason to worry. The demands on an ageing population and medical advances are rising. But spending plans up to the millennium, on which both main parties agree, show virtual zero growth.

Waiting lists are rising and health authorities, short of cash, are arbitrarily restricting treatments. The unequal provision of NHS care in different parts of the country is forcing patients to change their addresses in order to obtain the treatment that they need.

In the last week, *The Independent* has learned of a patient who has waited 13 months for heart surgery, of a cancer sufferer forced to rely on charity to pay for her drugs, a sick woman left for 14 hours on a trolley while doctors searched for a vacant bed and a multiple sclerosis sufferer who faces the prospect of moving to another part of the country to obtain the treatment that he needs.

Medical organisations say inequity is growing and the notion of the NHS providing equal care for all is a myth. They say rationing is inevitable and that with a fixed budget the

pressure to ration will grow. The parties refuse to accept the logic of the argument, insisting that with adequate funding rationing can be avoided.

Last week, nine medical charities wrote to the three main party leaders calling on the next Government to monitor the availability of treatments on the NHS and issue central guidance on which should be provided.

Peter Carey, chief executive of the Multiple Sclerosis Society, said: "The impact of ill health and disability is identical wherever people live but availability of treatments is all too often dictated by geography."

We believe the present lottery of care is totally unacceptable. While there must be limits on NHS resources, arbitrary rationing is not the way to manage them."

Variations in provision also affect routine services. Heart surgery rates vary threefold among districts and chemotherapy for cancer varies twofold.

Ken Judge, director of the policy institute at the Kings Fund, the health policy think tank, said: "Most people think we have a National Health Service, but what we actually have is 200 local health services. If resources are fixed and cost pressures increase, it is even

more important to distribute the available resources fairly. There must be more honesty and explicitness over what the NHS will provide."

Some analysts argue that Britain needs a "Bill of health rights", setting out what the public may expect from a publicly funded health service.

This ought to be preceded by a public debate on which elements should be considered part of the "core" service and which are optional extras.

The argument between the two main parties has focused not on these substantive issues but on the cost of running the NHS internal market, put by Labour at £1.5bn a year.

The Tories are sensitive to the charge and last year Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, ordered a 5-per-cent cut in management costs. Labour pledges to save £100m in the first year by reducing costs in the most over-managed authorities and trusts. Over the long term, Labour claims it can cut bureaucracy by 90 per cent. It says these savings will fund long-term growth in services.

Mr and Mrs Butler plan to vote Labour, to save the NHS. But the service needs a real increase of 3 per cent a year in funds, equivalent to £1bn, to meet rising demands. NHS managers say it is inconceivable that management savings will yield that sort of sum.

The future of the NHS rests on the tax-and-spending plans that neither Labour nor the Tories have the honesty to disclose prior to the election. That leaves voters, such as the Butlers, making a leap in the dark.

**THE INDEPENDENT HARRIS POLL**

	Change since last week
Labour	48% -1
Con	30% -1
Lib Dem	15% +2
Others	7%

Conservative predictions that Wednesday's ICM poll heralded a "collapse" in Labour's poll ratings are scotched by today's *Independent Harris poll*, showing Labour's lead unchanged at 18 points.

ICM's dramatic poll for the *Guardian* showed Tony Blair's lead cut from 14 points to five in the space of a week, but now three other polling companies which were carrying out interviews at the same time report no significant change.

MORI in the *Times* yesterday put Labour's lead at 21 points, up four from the previous week, while Gallup in the *Telegraph* has Labour's lead unchanged at 20 points.

While most pollsters remain nervous about their predictions of the levels of support for the parties, it seems there has been no significant movement in public opinion yet – on the surface at least.

Harris Research interviewed 1,777 adults face-to-face in their homes between 18 and 21 April.



### But who'll pay?

Diane Coyle  
and Anthony Bevin

There is a hole in the government finances. It is the chasm between our wish to pay American-style taxes and our preference for a European-style welfare state.

The two main parties have both lashed themselves to each horn of this dilemma. The resulting pain need not be immediate; there is less danger of big tax rises in a budget in July or November than of the slow crumbling of key public services – such as health.

The Tories and Labour played a game of fantasy budgets yesterday. Would Labour have to raise £12bn to pay for employment schemes, and lower VAT on fuel? Or would the Tories have to find more than £15bn to abolish inheritance tax and boost Britain's cadet forces?

It was a bitter row, with John Major plainly accusing Tony Blair of lying. But it is the kind of row you have with your husband over how to spend your lottery winnings when you never even buy a ticket.

Yesterday's political pantomime coincided with a fresh call from business for higher taxes. The British Chamber of Commerce said the penny cut in the basic rate of tax that has just come into effect should be

reversed. David Richardson, its president, said: "The last thing any government should ever do if it is trying to manage the economy effectively is to box itself in in this way."

But they are boxed in. All of the dividend from the strong economic growth expected this year and next will be needed to close the excessive gap between tax revenues and government spending. The reduction in borrowing will also depend on meeting the ultra-tough spending targets accepted by both Labour and Conservatives. As the Institute for Fiscal Studies has pointed out, the planned growth in expenditure in the next three years is lower by far than the average rise during any parliament of the past 80 years.

The menu of options for a government that wanted to raise more revenues without increasing income tax rates is long. It includes higher taxes on companies, cutting or axing tax reliefs like mortgage interest relief and increasing VAT.

Andrew Dilnot, director of the IFS, said that the crunch would come in a few years' time, with – yes – the National Health Service being the main pressure point. But by then the gap between the kind of health service we want and the kind we find ourselves living with might be too big to close.

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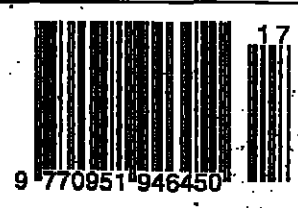
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Dep't 10.15.20

## significant shorts

## Police question youth over nine-year-old's car death

Police were yesterday questioning a 16-year-old youth after a 9-year-old girl was knocked down and killed by a stolen car. Teleri Bethan West died instantly when the blue Vauxhall Nova struck her after mounting the pavement opposite her home at Morganstown, near Cardiff, on Wednesday night. Sean Rogers, 14, a neighbour who was with her, suffered serious leg and pelvic injuries, and was detained in Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

Officers said the arrested driver of the car later failed a breath test, and a youth was being questioned at Fairwater police station in the city. A police spokeswoman said: "We need to speak to any witnesses of this very tragic accident. We are particularly anxious to trace the occupants of a maroon-coloured car which was in the vicinity."

## Two life sentences for twins' killer

A double killer was given two life sentences at the Old Bailey yesterday for the brutal murder of identical twin brothers whose battered bodies were found floating in a canal. David Dillon told a friend that Christopher and Anthony Langford had gone for "a long swim" after he bludgeoned them to death in an apparently motiveless attack. He wheeled their bodies through the streets in a shopping trolley before dumping them in the Regents Canal in north London. The 38-year-old twins, who lived on the streets of the capital, were the sons of a retired teacher and came from Bedfordshire, the court heard. Dillon, 38, an unemployed decorator, originally from County Cork, had denied murdering the brothers between February and April last year.

## £175,000 damages to pop designer

A former fashion designer who dressed rock stars David Bowie and Gary Glitter was yesterday awarded £175,000 agreed damages for the carbon-monoxide poisoning that devastated his life. Allan McRae, 46, who once worked with top couturier Norman Hartnell, was exposed to the fumes over a 14-year period in his council studio flat in Islington, north London. He said resulting health problems caused his business to fail in 1983. Ten years later, he was made redundant from a teaching post and remains unemployed, the High Court was told. Doctors have diagnosed frontal-lobe brain damage, which affects memory.

In December 1992, Mr McRae reported a faulty gas fire to the London Borough of Camden, from whom he let the flat in 1979. It was finally disconnected in February 1993. A spokesman for the borough said: "We accept that ultimate responsibility lies with the council", and added that in the past 18 months, rigorous checks on gas appliances had been carried out in nearly 30,000 homes.

## Animal magic at pet awards

Animal-mad celebrities mingled with heroic pets and their proud owners at the pet world's answer to the Oscars yesterday as hundreds of animal lovers turned out for the 1997 WAG Awards at the Intercontinental Hotel in London.

Among the pet-struck stars present were Jilly Cooper, the best-selling novelist, who picked up the personality of the year award in recognition of her lifetime support for animal welfare; Johnny Morris, the former presenter of *Animal Magic*; and the Channel 4 racing presenter, John McEnrick. The ceremony, hosted by Liza Goddard, and organised by animal insurers Pet Plan and the Animal Health Trust charity, paid tribute to outstanding bravery and talent among Britain's pets. Shandy, an 11-year-old golden retriever from Feltham, won the dog's award for twice saving his owner's life, and Solomon, a two-year-old British Blue cat from Dorset, took the feline prize for rescuing and protecting broods of tiny house martins whose nest had collapsed.

## When is a wedding not a wedding?

Around 25 Irish couples have been affected by a legal loophole which has left their church marriages invalid.

The problem, which could undermine family succession rights, arose from new family-legislation aimed at harmonising church and state marriages. Last year, for the first time, the state stipulated that couples must notify state registrars three months in advance of their intention to marry. The instruction's purpose is to ensure that couples reflect on their decision to marry, and so reduce the numbers of hasty unions breaking down. Newly passed legal amendments will retrospectively validate the status of 84 couples who believed they had notified registrars correctly before marriages. But 25 other couples will have no option but to go down the aisle again because they were in such a rush they neglected to give any notice at all.

Alan Murdoch

## School's drive for a new teacher

An overcrowded village school is to raffie a car to pay for a new teacher, after budget cuts forced governors to lose one member of staff last year. The cuts, at Kirkburton Church of England First School, near Huddersfield, forced the 105 pupils to study in three classes of 35. Joyce Worsfold, the head teacher, said a fourth full-time teacher would enable her to reduce class sizes and so improve children's education. Now the school hopes to raise £20,000 by selling 20,000 tickets at £1 each, with a prize of a brand new Citroen AX car. The school is buying the £8,500 car from a local dealership at a cut-price £5,000, mostly raised through donations from local businesses.

Lucy Ward

## people



Reach for the sky: American Linda Finch sets off yesterday from Lax, California, on a round-the-world flight in tribute to the aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart.

## Woman who lied about age is the world's oldest mother

A 63-year-old California woman who lied about her age to receive *in vitro* fertilisation treatment has become the world's oldest mother, after giving birth to a healthy girl last year, it was revealed yesterday.

Her case reopened the debate over so-called "test tube granny mums" but British fertility experts yesterday warned that to deny treatment solely on the grounds of age was "neither possible or desirable".

In this case, the woman, who has not been named, was well past menopause and became pregnant with an egg donated by another woman, but fertilised with her 60-year-old husband's sperm. She gave birth last November to a 6lb 2oz girl by Caesarian section and then breast-fed the infant.

The woman, a Filipino-American, deceived the clinic even though it put her through a rigorous physical check. In a statement, the clinic added: "Had the individual disclosed her actual age she would not have qualified for treatment, since the programme uses an arbitrary upper age limit of 55." Before her, the oldest mother record was held by an Italian, who was only a few months younger at 62 when she gave birth in 1994.

While menopause denies women the ability to conceive naturally from their own eggs, it would seem that for as long as they are physically strong and they have a healthy uterus, they can have a child from an egg fertilised *in vitro*.

A spokeswoman for the British Medical Association said patients should not be denied treatment on the grounds of age or sex, but the best interests of the child should be paramount.

Dr Richard Nicholson, editor of the *Bulletin of Medical Ethics* said that if a woman gave birth at 63 "there [is] considerable likelihood one or other parent will die while the child is still in the teenage years".

In the past the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority has said that, in general, women in their fifties should not be given treatment because of the difficulties children would face. But Susan Rice, chief executive of the national fertility association, said yesterday: "Chronological age is not an indication of physical age or condition and it is not possible or desirable to make hard and fast rules saying people over a certain age cannot be treated."

David Usborne and Glenda Cooper

## IRA Maze escaper back behind bars

An IRA fugitive who escaped from Northern Ireland's Maze prison in a mass breakout 14 years ago was back behind bars in Dublin last night after being detained by Irish police serving an extradition warrant. Dermot McNally, 39 (right), was arrested at his home in Sligo early yesterday by Gardaí acting on 14 extradition warrants supplied by the RUC.

McNally, 39, from County Armagh, was serving a life sentence for causing explosions when he escaped with 37 other IRA members in September, 1983.

Most of the Maze escapees were rearrested near the jail, but 19 got away from the area.

McNally appeared before Dublin District Court yesterday afternoon. The father-of-two, wearing a green jacket, cream shirt and jeans, arrived at the court amid high security at 4pm.

Police sergeant Michael Heffernan told the court he arrested McNally at 6.15am. He said he had asked the man who answered the door if he was Dermot McNally and the man replied: "That's me."

Sgt Heffernan said the warrants related to making bombs, possession of bombs and bomb-making equipment, causing explosions, possession of firearms and one count of wounding with intent to commit grievous bodily harm.



In addition, the warrants alleged McNally had been sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for the various offences and that he unlawfully escaped from custody on September 23, 1983.

McNally had been living openly in Sligo after court rulings in the Republic that prevented the extradition of other Maze escapees.

In March, 1990, the Republic's Supreme Court refused to extradite two of the escapees - Dermot Finucane and James Pius Clarke - on the grounds that their offences were political.

McNally, originally from Lurgan, in Co Armagh, was jailed for life in 1977 for causing explosions. He was given three life sentences for bombing a wine lodge, a post office and a railway station.

## Woman sues over love-cheat Romeo

A dating agency is being sued by one of its clients, after it fixed her up with a married man. Divorced Margaret Ruddlesden, 47 wrote "lying bastard" on Alwyn Phillips' underpants and thrust his clothes into the hands of his wife when she realised.

Ms Ruddlesden had paid £417 to join Close Encounters (of the Best Kind) after moving to Bristol and was soon in the arms of Mr Phillips, 47, who worked in a frozen food depot.

But the affair was swiftly curtailed when she realised he was living with his wife, Theresa.

Yesterday, Ms Ruddlesden told the *Western Daily Press*: "Alwyn's car was parked outside my house when someone crashed into the back of it. The police turned up and Alwyn had to give his details. From that moment on his attitude changed."

"Until then it had been red roses and chocolates and he even asked me to marry him. But after the accident he didn't ring for days. I knew something was wrong."

When she went to his home his wife answered the door. The next day he finally phoned and agreed to meet her to collect some of his clothes. "I was enraged. I stuffed labels in the back of his pants, then I wrote 'lying bastard' on the back of them."

The agency has now offered to return the introduction fee.

## briefing

## EDUCATION

## Number of college students continues to increase

The number of students in further education colleges rose this year, for the third year running, to just under 2.5 million, according to figures released yesterday. Data from the Further Education Funding Council shows that sixth-form colleges, with 154,000 students in 1996-7, are among the institutions with the biggest increase. The colleges, which often have a strong academic reputation and score highly in exam league tables, attracted 11 per cent more students than last year.

The number of older people enrolling in colleges has also contributed to the rise in overall numbers, with an 11 per cent rise in those aged 60 and above returning to learning.

The trend reflects colleges' attempts to seek out new student markets among adults in order to hit government-set recruitment targets amid tough competition with schools for sixth-form age students.

Further education students were this year studying for 3.6 million qualifications, a fifth of them A-levels. Second most popular were GCSEs, followed by the government's National Vocational Qualifications, which test competence in particular trades and skills.

## TECHNOLOGY

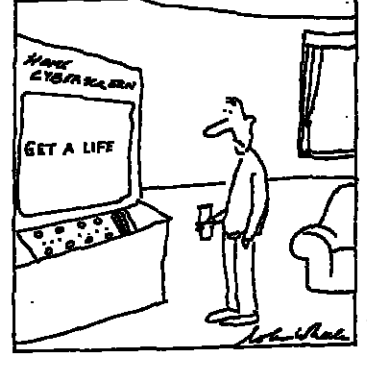
## Home of the future unveiled

Computer giants IBM, Intel, Compaq and Hewlett-Packard have put a lot of thought into making people think less in the cyberhome of 2000. Their house of the future, unveiled this week at San Francisco's Blaisdell Gallery, features a range of gadgets, from electronic butlers to computerised grocery lists, designed to ease the stresses of modern life.

A 42-inch flat-panel screen in the living room, showing the film *Bladerunner*, uses no cathode ray tube, and no enormous box; just a huge picture on a thin screen, priced at \$20,000.

Intel's Car-PC, meanwhile, is loaded with software that recognizes your voice. Give the word "radio" and it tunes in. Say "phone" and it dials a number. And when away from the house, IBM's prototype video doorbell is your butler. Ring the bell and a voice booms out: "No one's home, but leave a video message."

In the kitchen, the Cyberhome 2000 has a special scanner. Run it over a packaging bar code, and information pops up on a screen. The scanner tells you how long it will take to heat the food and even sets the microwave. It can also connect you to the food manufacturer's Web site, to pick up recipes online. If it's your last can or packet, the system reminds you.



## HEALTH

## Breakthrough for arthritis treatment

A pioneering inflammation therapy offers new hope for sufferers of rheumatoid arthritis, it was announced yesterday. Researchers from 11 European countries, led by Barry Bresnihan, Professor of Rheumatology at University College, Dublin, have developed a naturally occurring chemical messenger made by the body so that it can be used as a treatment.

The chemical, Interleukin-1ra (IL-1ra), regulates another messenger, IL-1, which promotes inflammation and the destruction of cartilage and bone.

A six-month trial has now been completed involving 472 arthritis sufferers at 41 hospitals in 11 countries. They were split up into groups and given different amounts of IL-1ra.

Those given the maximum 150mg-a-day dose showed a significant improvement over the placebo group at 24 weeks. In addition they experienced a slowing in the rate of damage to the joints. The trial was continued for a further six months and improvement was maintained throughout the one-year follow-up period. No important adverse effects were reported.

The findings were reported at the annual meeting of the British Society for Rheumatology in Harrogate.

## IMMIGRATION

## Limited citizenship for 200,000

More than 200,000 people living in Hong Kong were granted a limited form of British citizenship last year in the run up to China taking control of the colony. The Hong Kong residents have obtained British Dependent Territories citizenship, which entitles them to visit the UK without a visa and offers them British consular protection in other countries.

An additional 5,511 were given full British citizenship last year. The huge influx - just 29,000 people from Hong Kong gained part citizenship in 1995 - reflects fears of Chinese repression.

In total, the number of people granted British citizenship, excluding those from Hong Kong, rose to 43,000 in 1996, a slight increase on the previous year.

Persons Granted British Citizenship, 1996, Home Office research directorate, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

Jason Bennetto

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مكتبة الأهل



# Morning-after drug could stop Aids

Jeremy Laurence  
Health Editor

A "morning after" treatment for people exposed to the Aids virus, HIV, is proving successful in preventing them becoming infected, doctors say. The treatment – the same cocktail of drugs used to treat people with established HIV – can reduce the chances of infection by 80 per cent if given immediately after exposure to the virus.

Because the role of the drugs as a preventive measure has

been concealed in case it encouraged unsafe sex and triggered a rush for expensive drugs – some doctors have claimed that the treatment is not being made available to that need it.

Studies have shown that in pregnant women with HIV and people jabbed with contaminated needles, antiviral drugs given promptly can stop transmission of the disease, either to the baby or the injured person. Scientists believe that prophylactic treatment following unprotected intercourse with an

HIV-infected person can also restrict transmission, although no studies have been done.

AZT, the Aids drug can reduce the risk of transmission to the baby from 26 per cent to 8 per cent when given to pregnant women with HIV before and during delivery, and to the infant for six weeks after birth. In people jabbed with used needles, AZT treatment for three to four weeks afterwards reduces the risk of infection by 80 per cent. Guidelines in the US recommend that health work-

ers who suffer needlestick injuries should be treated with a cocktail of three drugs for four weeks afterwards.

A review of Aids drugs in the *Drug and Therapeutics Bulletin*, a guide for doctors published by the Consumers' Association, says prophylactic treatment should be offered to HIV-infected pregnant women to prevent infection of their babies and to people injured by contaminated needles. But it says there is no agreement on whether people should get it after unsafe sex.

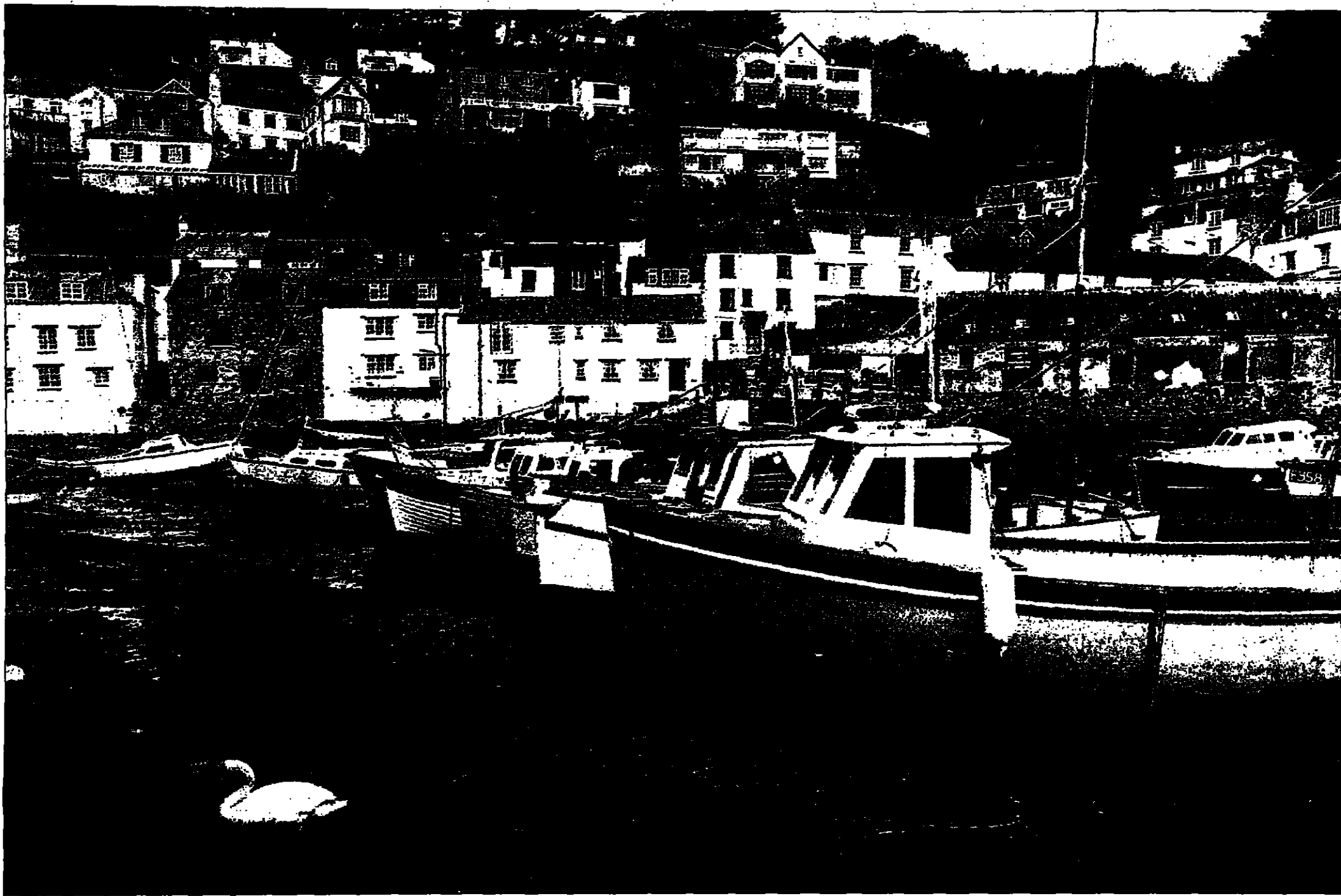
Dr Joe Collier, editor of the *Bulletin*, said: "Prophylactic treatment after unsafe sex should be thought through carefully and shouldn't be overlooked. There are unusual circumstances – such as rape – where it could be appropriate but people don't know about it." Some doctors in the UK had already prescribed the drugs to patients after risky sex and a study of their efficacy as a preventive measure following unprotected intercourse was beginning in San Francisco, Dr

Collier said. "If you get a scratch with an infected needle it is crucial you get down to a clinic quickly and get treatment. It can reduce the incidence a lot. The same is true for HIV-infected pregnant women."

"For people exposed to the virus through sex, it is more difficult. Aids doctors don't want people phoning up every morning after they have had unsafe sex. That is an abuse of the arrangements when they should be wearing condoms or having safe sex."

Professor Michael Adler, head of the Aids clinic at University College Hospital, London, said most hospitals now had a policy of treating pregnant women and health workers who suffered needlestick injuries but there was concern at the development of a "morning after" mentality in relation to sex. "These drugs are toxic and four weeks' treatment costs £600. If people feel there is a morning after pill and they don't have to have safe sex it sends the wrong message."

The Aids virus is becoming more aggressive and dangerous, causing recently infected people to become ill faster, according to a study. Doctors in Italy who studied 285 patients infected between 1985 and 1995 found that those infected during the past six years were more likely to have immune system cells knocked out by the virus, and developed Aids more quickly. However, British experts said they had seen no similar change in the course of the disease in the UK.



Blue Water, white death: Freddie the Swan cruising in Polperro harbour, where locals have been watching in horror as he murders scores of local ducklings

Photograph: Apex

## Murder, mayhem and a Swan called Freddie

Mark Rowe

It is a tale of murder, intrigue and dark threats. The Cornish fishing village of Polperro, population 1,585, has been split down the middle by its resident swan called Freddie.

Freddie, after the fashion of his Hollywood namesake Mr Kruger, has created a nightmare on Polperro Street.

A territorial creature at the best of times, the cob swan has reacted to his mate, Phreda, coming into season by killing ducklings in the village harbour to make sure any bread available goes to his own offspring. Last weekend he is said to have maimed and then drowned 12 ducklings.

In a dramatic escalation of the feud between the pro-duck and pro-swan factions, dead ducklings have been pushed through the letter box of the Three Pilchards public house, whose landlord has been accused of being pro-swan.

This prompted the licensee, Andy Puckey, to put a poster on his front door that read: "Latest score: Swan 6 Ducks 0. And will the secret postman/woman have the courage to reveal themselves? I doubt it!!!!" Police from Looe were called in to remove the poster because they were concerned it might cause a breach of public order. They reprimanded a teenage boy for the duckling deliveries but took no further action.

Mr Puckey admitted that he used to be pro-swan but says he now wants to see them gone as much as anyone.

"It's for their own safety really because one of these nights that cob is going to end up dead," he said.

Some residents who have decided enough is enough took to the water last week during one of Freddie's frenzies to stop the slaughter. Monica Field-Johnson said: "I went out in a small boat and was trying to put him off by bashing him over the head with a plastic paddle. But it was like hitting a warship with a dingbat."

"It's most unpleasant. He grabs the ducklings as they come bobbing down the river, throws them in the

air and drowns them. You find dismembered ducklings all over the harbour. It makes the children cry."

"He is a particularly butch and macho swan and has got to be removed by legal means otherwise somebody is going to take the law into their own hands."

Harbour trustee, pro-duck Graham Jolliffe said those who wanted the swan to stay saw the swans as substitute children. "There are lots of old dears who have adopted the swan because their children have left home and they have no pets."

"But this harbour is no place for swans. When young swans are learning to fly they have the problem of all the wires round the harbour. They go straight into the

chimneys and we are forever picking them up when they are injured."

A spokesman for Devon and Cornwall police said: "It has split the community down the middle. Our only concern is for public order and that the birds are not harmed in any way. We can't actually arrest the swan for murder."

For most of the 10 years he has been in the village Freddie adopted a less militant approach towards his feathered neighbours and was a village favourite. Residents even clubbed together to buy a raft for him to nest on.

But as Freddie and Phreda feasted on the bread provided by well-meaning villagers, ducks were attracted to the free meals on offer and that is when the feathers started flying.

The problem is that Polperro harbour has no natural food source, such as mud flats or grass, so the swans are dependent on the goodwill of villagers and will fight anything that may threaten their food.

Two years ago, Freddie killed around 80 ducklings, prompting some villagers to spray him with washing-up liquid.

The RSPCA said it had no plan to remove Freddie and Phreda. "The swan is doing what comes naturally and is defending the food for its own offspring," said spokeswoman Julie Briggs. "We would seek to prosecute anyone caught spraying him with detergent."

## Enigma of Elgar's missing festival music

Classical music fans have reacted with shock to the news that a festival organised in memory of Edward Elgar will not feature any of his music.

Some members of the Elgar Society are upset that this year's Malvern Elgar Festival will incorporate the work of Schubert and Brahms, but not the man after whom the event is named.

The organisers say they made the unusual move because the annual festival has been switched from a large concert hall, which is being refurbished, to a church which is unsuitable for Elgar's compositions.

Artistic director William Boughton confirmed that a committee had decided to ditch Elgar's works in favour of Continental composers for the event held in Malvern, Worcestershire, from 27 May to 7 June.

John Harcup, a society member, said he could understand why the Priory Church's limited capacity meant that Elgar's most famous works were unsuitable, but thought lesser-known pieces should be performed. "I don't see how one can have an Elgar Festival with no Elgar," he said. "It is daft to call it an Elgar Festival when there is no Elgar. It's quite unbelievable. Elgar got engaged in Malvern and if he was still alive I think he would be very upset."

Mr Harcup said the change to a smaller venue should have been an opportunity for organisers to line up the composer's lesser-known works, such as his church music, which would be perfect for the venue.

But Mr Boughton, the artistic director at the centre of the controversy, said that Elgar's larger works, such as *Dream of Gerontius*, could not be performed for financial reasons and because of poor acoustics. "Including his minor works would be just tokenism," he said. "It would be disrespectful both to Elgar and the audiences to put in a few little pieces of his just to placate people. The arts are not about placating people – they are about stimulating people."

The event was to have been staged at the town's Winter Gardens, where, Mr Boughton said, Elgar's music will definitely be heard next year. "I can assure people Elgar will be back in '98. The reasons for this are artistic and financial. I am sorry they are not having their beloved Elgar, but I have too much respect for him and his music to reduce him to a token."

Hywel Davies, secretary of the 250-strong West Midlands branch of the society, said: "One understands that a few people are upset about this. It's a shame, but I think it's out of our control."

"You can't expect someone to put on a concert and lose money, but our society will live through it; we are a broad church."

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## news

# Bungles stop EU aid going to poorest

Sarah Helm  
Brussels

Large amounts of Britain's £1.5bn share of EU regional-aid money have been directed by the Government towards its favoured projects, while failing to ensure that funds reach the needy in Britain's poorest areas, according to European Parliament figures.

Delays and bungles by government administrators in distributing funds caused debt and even bankruptcy among bodies such as colleges and voluntary groups as they waited for their cash. The report also discloses that Britain's public utilities have been fattened up with £450m of regional-aid money, before and after privatisation. The report confirms suspicions that the Government has tried to obscure the importance to Britain of EU structural funds, which are to help the poorest regions.

In many cases where successful job-creation projects have been launched with EU money, the Government claimed the credit for itself. The parliament, which adopted the report yesterday, levels its strongest criticism at the way public utilities became major recipients of the structural funds in the 1980s and early 1990s, even after privatisation.

Europe's structural funds are specifically intended to promote job creation, but these same utilities have been engaged in massive job reduction and downsizing, says the report, which cites 300,000 job losses in five privatised companies.

The report's author is Arlene McCarthy, Labour MEP for the Peak District, who based her studies on 25 hours of evidence from parties across Britain, and 2,000 questionnaires. British Conservative members of the parliament yesterday voted against the report.

Miss McCarthy questioned the morality of the way money was directed to utilities which then produced huge profits for shareholders after privatisation. Yorkshire Water received £30m of regional-development money before it was privatised and £1m after. British gas, electricity, telecoms and ports benefited the same way. It could be argued, says the report, "that the financial position of state utilities was enhanced ahead of privatisation with the use of EU taxpayers funds."

The European Commission, which has already inquired into the way aid funds have been used during the British privatisation process, has found nothing illegal. However, the Commission points out that no other country has directed funds to privatised utilities, and says that new rules will be drawn up in future, as privatisation speeds up in other member-states. The parliament's research shed light on benefits Britain has reaped from aid funds, particularly in areas of industrial decline, known as "objective two" areas, which include the East and West Midlands, Yorkshire, Humberside, the North-east, east Scotland and west Cumbria. Britain has the highest allocation of EU funds for "objective two" areas in the Union.

However, money, distributed largely by government-appointed committees, often fails to reach recipients as a result of low staffing, over-centralisation and lack of planning. Many groups in the voluntary sector, as well as training colleges and small businesses, are deterred from applying for funds because of fears about delays and debt, says the report.

In one case a college in Humberside ran up £200,000 in debt because funding agreed for a training scheme arrived two years too late.



Pole position: A fisherman putting up stake nets at St Cyrus beach in Aberdeenshire for the start of the salmon and trout season. The method is unique to St Cyrus and has continued for more than 100 years, but is threatened by dwindling stocks due to over fishing and seals. Photograph: Colin McPherson

## Kinnock demands damages for truckers

Colin Blackstock  
and Katherine Butler

Neil Kinnock, the EU transport commissioner, yesterday called on the French to compensate hauliers caught up in the two-day blockade of Channel ports, while British ferry companies are threatening to enforce fines of up to 150,000 francs on the fishermen involved.

In Brussels, Mr Kinnock accused the French of reneging on their promise to pay out compensation to victims of last year's French lorry drivers strike.

In a letter to French transport minister Bernard Pons, Mr Kinnock complained that many road haulage companies from neighbouring countries had

suffered "significant" damages because of the blockade. He demanded that similar levels of compensation as promised during the truckers dispute be applied this time.

Mr Kinnock's office has been inundated with complaints from road haulage companies who say their claims have still not been dealt with.

Brussels does not have the power to order compensation be paid and can only exert moral pressure on the French. Mr Kinnock admitted he was still waiting for Paris to submit a report detailing the number of compensation claims it had dealt with to date, but said French sovereignty had to be respected. "Obviously it is frustrating for

me not to be able to intervene directly, but the people who are calling for that would be the first to express their outrage if Brussels intervened in a dispute in their country."

The ferry companies affected by the dispute were considering their options yesterday. A spokesman for Stena Line said Stena, P&O, and SeaFrance were all granted injunctions against the fishermen involved in the blockades and were entitled to ask the French courts to impose fines of up to 150,000 francs on each boat.

However the spokesman said it was unlikely they would seek to enforce the fines available through the injunction for the sake of diplomacy.

The spokesman said: "We don't want to inflame the situation by pursuing these fines, and losing customers. We have decided not to ask the courts to invoke the injunctions which last for one month."

"By not invoking the injunctions we can give ourselves the option of waiting for a month to see what the fishermen do. Depending on what they do will depend on whether we invoke the injunction."

A spokeswoman for P&O said: "We would only consider this action provided we were given assurances that the port of Calais remained open and free from further blockades." The Stena spokesman made it clear that they would have to

invoke the injunctions if the fishermen decided to blockade the ports again. "I think the danger of not pursuing the fines means that any future injunctions against more blockades lose force. If we seek an injunction and then fail to follow it up then it really negates that course of action in the future."

Under the terms of the injunction each boat involved in the blockade can be fined 10,000 francs per hour for every hour it remains in the blockade after the injunction is served. The French fishermen were served the injunction at 7pm on Wednesday evening, but did not leave until 10am yesterday morning. Meanwhile the EU fisheries

spokesman Filippo di Robilant said it was up to the French to seek a review of the controversial rules on fishing net sizes which triggered the blockade.

Paris had not asked for the regulation, designed to conserve fish, to be amended and it would in any case have to persuade a majority of its EU partners if the legislation was to be changed.

Mr Di Robilant said Brussels would oppose a revision of the law scheduled to come into effect in January because the restrictions were needed to conserve fish. The blockade, he said, provided further "clear evidence that there are too many fishermen chasing too few fish". Leading article, page 19

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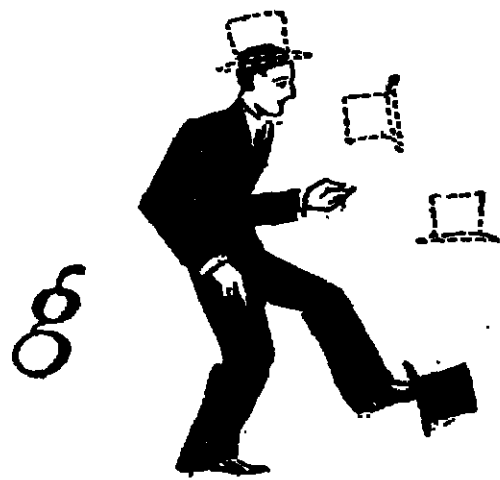


Fig. 7. Juggling and balancing with difficult objects.

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## Fayed's court challenge fails

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

The decisions of Sir Gordon Downey, the watchdog on parliamentary malpractice, cannot be challenged in the courts, a High Court judge ruled yesterday. Mr Justice Sedley rejected a bid by Harrod's owner, Mohamed al-Fayed, to question the validity of a report concerning the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, saying that the court had no jurisdiction over Sir Gordon's actions.

The report, completed in March, cleared Mr Howard of allegations by Mr Fayed that he took £1.5m in bribes from Loochro chief Tiny Rowland through an intermediary in 1987, in exchange for opening a Department of Trade and Industry inquiry into the takeover of House of Fraser.

Mr Fayed's counsel, David Pannick QC, had applied to the court for a judicial review of the report, asking for it to be quashed as unreasonable. Sir Gordon had failed to question several witnesses and was not thorough enough in looking into Mr Howard's acquisition of funds and property, it was alleged. The case raised a question of "considerable constitutional importance" over whether or not the commissioner was subject to challenge in the courts. He



Fayed: Failed to have Sir Gordon's report quashed

should not be immune from review, Mr Pannick argued.

Mr Pannick said the commissioner performed an "important governmental function involving matters of substantial public interest, that is conducting official investigations into allegations of breaches of parliamentary standards."

Stephen Richards, for the commissioner, said his client was an officer of Parliament appointed internally after the recommendations of the Nolan report into parliamentary standards. His role was to investigate complaints about the conduct of MPs. "The House of Commons is not subject to the courts in internal proceedings," he argued. Mr Pannick said that if the

courts gave the message to Parliament that any persons appointed by standing orders rather than legislation were not

subject to court control, government departments would be able to "immunise" decisions of important bodies from judicial review. The court should consider the scope of judicial review.

Mr Justice Sedley, giving his ruling, said the "constitutional divide" between the judiciary and Parliament was of "great historical importance". He said that Sir Gordon was not subject to scrutiny because he had been appointed internally by Parliament to report directly to a select committee. That did not mean Parliament could hide from judicial review by carrying out investigations under standing orders, because departments of state were part of the executive and open to control by statute and common law.

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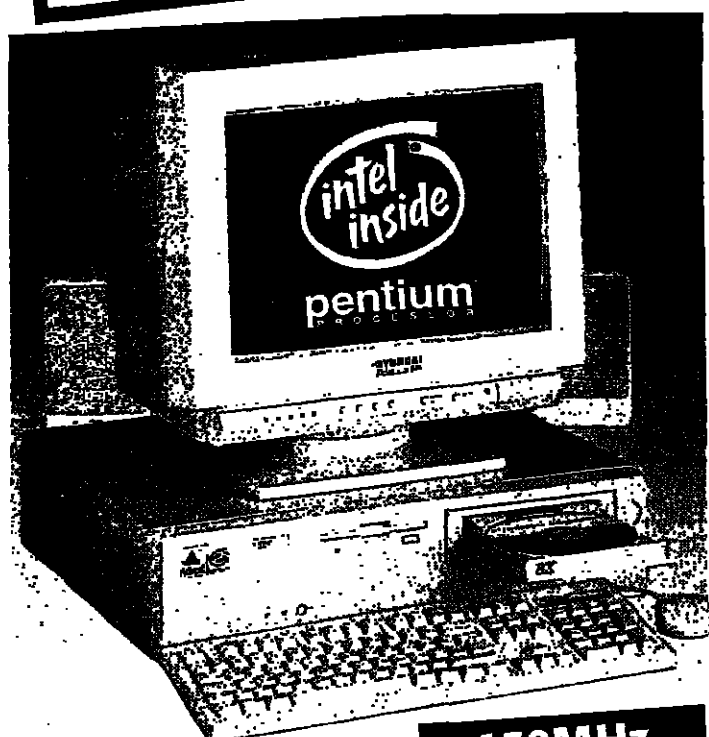


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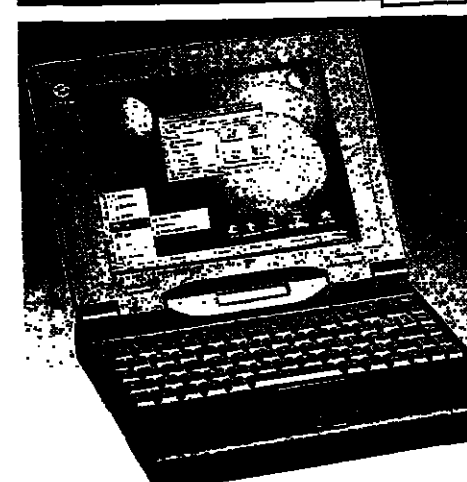
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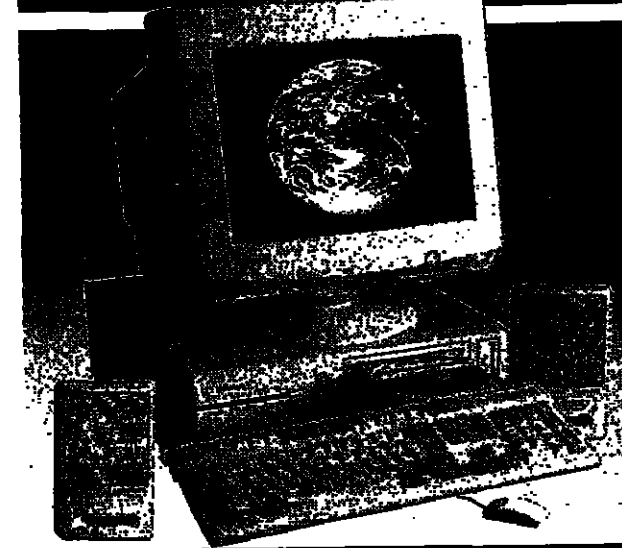
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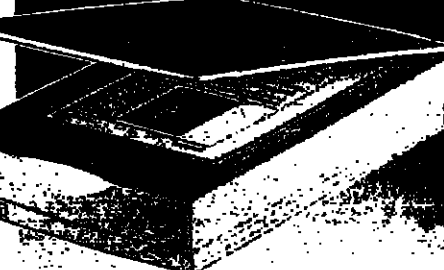


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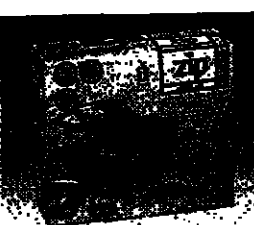
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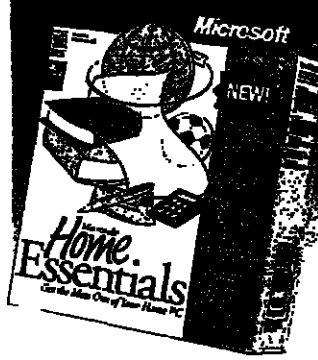
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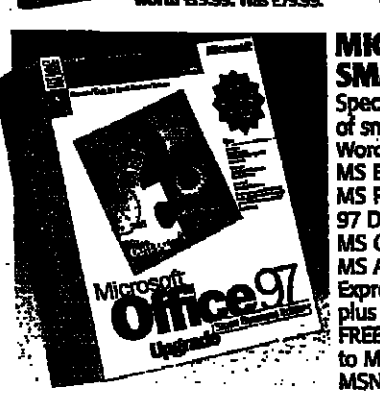
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# Charities warn over poor diet of young

Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

Large numbers of British children could suffer malnutrition in the next century unless urgent action is taken, according to food experts.

Two major reports published today say that families living in deprived areas without access to supermarkets and little money are unable to give their children an adequate diet.

The reports have been conducted by Save The Children which is best known for its famine relief work overseas, and the National Food Alliance which represents national public interest organisations.

Save The Children interviewed mothers in London, Glasgow, Coventry, Sunderland and Belfast. It found that they understood the need to eat more fruit and vegetables. They were also resourceful shoppers and were willing to go into debt or miss meals themselves to prevent their children from

going hungry. But they had restricted access to cheap food, being forced to use expensive local shops.

The survey's results were backed up by a report by the National Food Alliance attacking "the main misconceptions about eating healthily on a low income".

The report found that between 13 and 14 million people live in households where the income is below 50 per cent of the UK average - less than about £120 a week. Many of these families eat as little as 95g of fresh green vegetables each week, equivalent to barely one Brussels sprout per person per day.

Poor households consume almost twice the amount of full-fat milk as the well-off, and more than double the amount of white bread.

In 1995, a study of the costs of a modest but nutritionally adequate diet to meet the needs of women, especially when pregnant, found their diet cost an average of £18.12 and could cost as much as £23 a week if there was no supermarket nearby - representing up to 60 per cent of the whole benefit payment for women aged 18-25.

"Cheapest calories come from foods generally considered unhealthy," continues the report. "To get all the calories needed in a day when spending the least money the best bet is to go for a high-fat sugary diet - biscuits, sweet tea, white bread with hard margarine."

The idea that low-income families would spend any extra money on "fags and the lottery" is also a myth. Given £10 extra a week 46 per cent of low-income families say they would spend it on food.

The groups called on the Government to implement a national strategy on food and low income, and carry out a comprehensive assessment of social security benefits. They also called for free school milk to be reinstated.

□ "Out of the Frying Pan: The True Costs of Feeding a Family on a Low Income" is available from Save The Children Publications, 0171 703 5400. No charge, but the charity welcomes donations.

□ "If they don't eat a healthy diet it's their own fault" - Myths about Food and Low Income" is available from the NFA, 5-11 Worship St, London EC2A 2BH priced £20

Bereaved father's claim for his wife's benefits could end up costing the taxpayer millions



Lone parent: Kevin Willis in London yesterday to draw attention to the difficulties that widowed fathers face. He intends to take his case to the European Court. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

## 'My children have lost a mother. Why must they lose cash as well?'

Simon Reeve

A widower launched proceedings against the Government in the European Court of Human Rights yesterday in a case which could cost the Treasury hundreds of millions of pounds in extra payments to bereaved fathers, who currently receive less state money than widowed mothers.

Kevin Willis, from Bristol, is bringing up two young children on his own after his wife Marlene died of cancer last June. Although a woman in his position would qualify for a one-off payment of £1,000 and a weekly sum of nearly £85, Mr Willis is forced to live off diminishing savings.

With the backing of the Child Poverty Action Group and the Campaign for Widowed Fathers' Benefits, Mr Willis is taking the Government to the European Court in Strasbourg. He is furious that Britain is the only country in the European Union where he, and approximately 20,000 other bereaved fathers, are ineligible for benefits.

"The children have lost their mother and it seems grossly unfair to me that they should suffer financially as well just because it was mum and not dad who died," said Mr Willis yesterday. "It is completely unjust that motherless children should be worst affected."

Mr Willis gave up work to care for his wife after her condition was diagnosed in 1990, shortly after the birth of their second child. "We sat down together and talked about finances because we knew she hadn't got long to live and Marlene desperately wanted her children to have a decent upbringing," said Mr Willis. "We knew there wasn't much support available and we knew we had to save money quickly."

Mr Willis worked as a housing officer for Bristol Housing Authority until 1993, when she had to leave because of her health. "She knew how difficult a mortgage can be for just one partner, and the relief on her face was obvious when we made the last payment the next year. She knew that whatever happened to her, there would be a house to live in for all of us."

Mr Willis previously worked for nine years as a field service engineer, which involved travelling away from home, and he is now determined to look after his children full time. Yesterday, he rushed back to Bristol from a round of television interviews and meetings in London to take his daughter to a Brownies meeting.

"While I am caring for them I will only be able to take a low-paid part-time job. Many fathers in my situation have to make a decision between losing their children or losing their home," said Mr Willis. "I am not prepared to let my family fall into that poverty-trap after what we

have already been through." The family are now surviving on their savings, which Mr Willis believes will last for another four years, plus child benefit and £100 a month from his wife's pension.

After his claim for support was rejected last November, Mr Willis decided to take action on the grounds that the Government is in breach of various provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, including Article 8, which concerns the right to a family life. "Marlene had been in her job paying taxes for 19 years," said Mr Willis, "and it is not right that the state doesn't provide for her children after she has gone."

Humphrey Woods, of the Campaign for Widowed Fathers' Benefits, said the situation dated back to the time when men were the sole breadwinners. "But times have changed and so should the benefit rules," he said. The Child Poverty Action Group said that although there were other state benefits for widowers it was unfair that men such as Mr Willis are worse off than women in similar situations. "Based on recent cases we believe we have a strong case," said David Thomas, the CPAG's legal officer. "However, rather than force Kevin to take his case all the way to Strasbourg, we would like to see whoever is in power after the election change the rules to reflect the reality of modern life."

## How to avoid loss where wife is the breadwinner

Nic Cicuttii  
Personal Finance Editor

Bereavement is a terrible enough trauma without the financial uncertainties that can follow when the family's breadwinner dies.

Although those most likely to be affected are women whose partners have died, a significant number of men face the same problem. According to the Child Poverty Action Group, between 20,000 and 40,000 widowers are denied such benefits.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics show women are the sole breadwinners in 553,000 families where the husband is unemployed.

The most effective way to protect oneself in such cases is to take out insurance. Before taking that step, it is worth checking whether there is a life insurance cover as a work-related perk. Many employers offer such cover, often between twice and four times the person's salary. However, a survey by Legal & General found only 24 per cent of men had life cover through their work, and only 4 per cent of women are in jobs where such cover is available.

In most cases, the breadwinner's death should lead to the family's mortgage being paid off through separate life cover linked to the loan.

Here, it is important to ensure that both men and women are jointly named on the insurance. If the home and the insurance were in the husband's name only, but the mortgage is paid only by the woman, in the event of her death the loan may not be paid off.

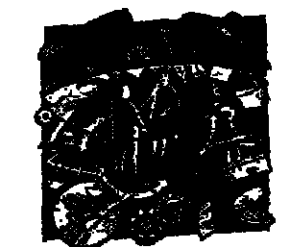
Life cover is the main alternative for those who fear leaving their dependents in a financial mess if they die. The cheapest option is so-called term assurance, where cover is taken out for a limited period. If the policyholder dies in that time, the insurance pays out. The reverse applies if the policyholder survives.

For a 30-year-old couple just starting a family, joint term assurance of £80,000 for 20 years to cover their children's early years costs about £15 a month.

Finally, critical illness insurance, a relatively new type of policy, pays out on diagnosis of several so-called "dread" diseases, including cancer, sudden strokes and heart attacks.

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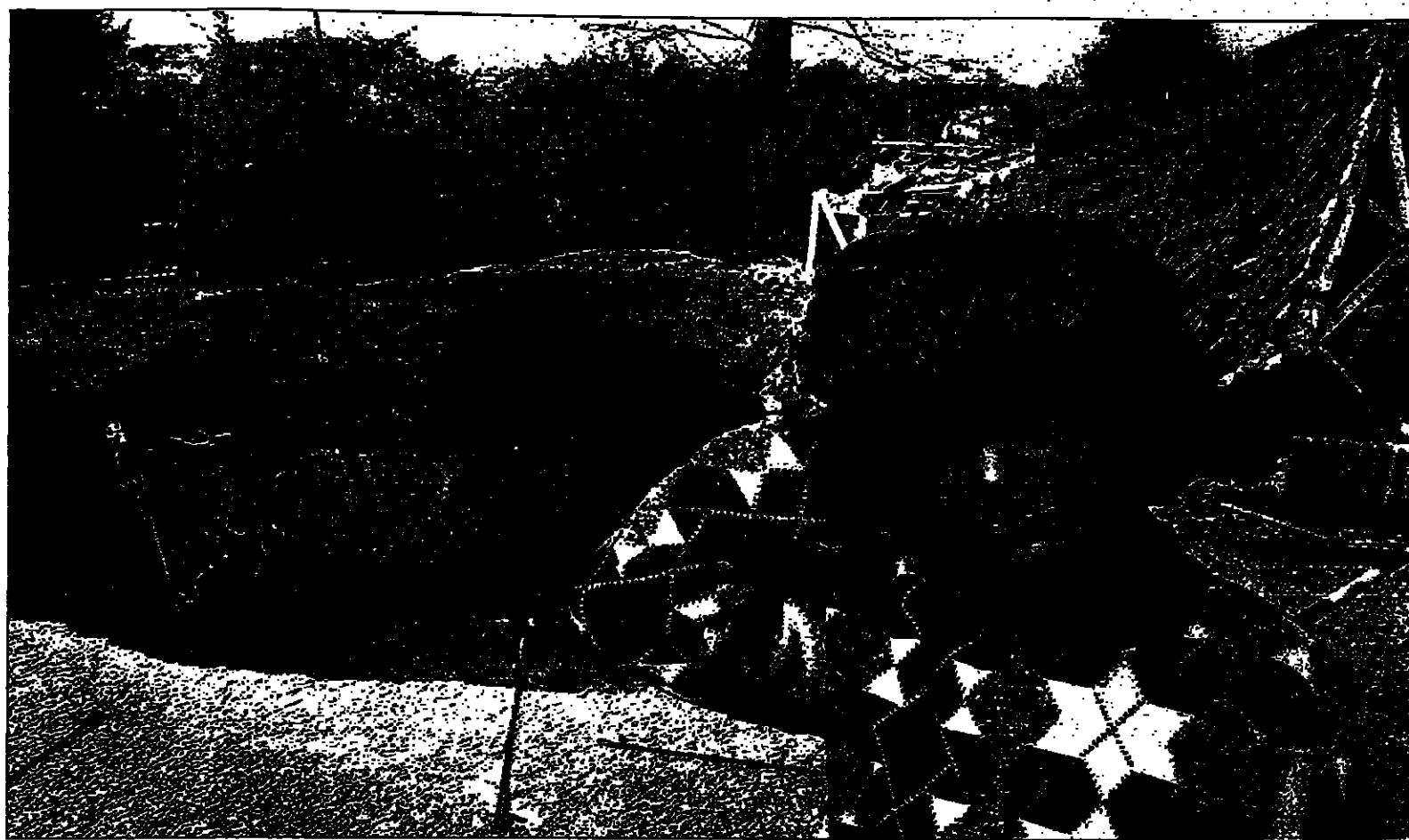
## news

Families  
in a hole  
as the  
earth  
opens up

Esther Leach

A hole in the ground big enough to swallow a house developed overnight in Ripon, North Yorkshire, forcing at least five families to leave their homes. The hole, thought to be a naturally occurring cavern, opened up minutes after two children who had been playing on the site were called in by their mother. It grew bigger overnight and a nearby house garage fell into the chasm, which was filled with water.

Jane Sherwood-Britton, whose £95,000 house in Ure Bank Terrace faces the hole, said she had lost everything. "Our house is not safe to live in and it's now worthless. The hole appeared at about 7pm just as I called my children in. We called the emergency services and we were told to evacuate, but I stayed overnight. I just didn't want to leave my home. At 2am I heard a loud whirring noise, water shot up



Close shave: Jane Sherwood-Britton and the 40ft-deep hole that appeared in her garden, wrecking the garage

Photograph: Peter Byrne/Gazelle

into the air and the garage slipped into the hole. It was like a whirlpool."

Mrs Shepherd-Britton is staying with friends nearby and is taking legal advice.

A spokesman for Harrogate council said officials were investigating the cause of the sudden appearance of the hole. They believe it could be a geological fault involving gypsum,

which is dissolved by water and can cause sudden collapse, especially if found close to the surface of the ground. John Kirkman, chief building control officer for the council, said:

"People have been instructed to move out of their homes in the interests of their own safety. We are monitoring the situation and until insurance engineers and independent engineers can assess

the level of danger they cannot move back in." Gas and electric companies were on standby to switch off supplies to the street at a moment's notice and police have sealed off the area.

Solvents  
can cause  
damage  
to nervesJeremy Laurence  
Health Editor

Users of paints, glues or cleaning agents containing solvents may suffer damage to their nervous systems if they do not protect themselves, scientists say.

Solvents commonly used at work and in the home can cause serious long-term neurological damage when inhaled or brought into contact with the skin. Studies show that people exposed to the chemicals have suffered symptoms ranging from tingling and numbness to muscle weakness and loss of feeling.

In more advanced cases, when the brain is affected, the symptoms may mimic those of multiple sclerosis or dementia, with loss of memory, inability to think clearly and depression. One high-dose exposure or low-level exposure over a long period can be enough to cause damage.

Professor Roberta White and Dr Susan Proctor, environmental health experts at the University of Boston, in Massachusetts, say in the *Lancet* that almost 10 million people in the United States have daily contact with solvents and the number is rising with increasing use of the chemicals in new

technologies. Workers in solvent-using industries, such as paint production, car manufacture and dry-cleaning are at greatest risk of nerve damage, but people using paints and glues at home may also be at risk, they say.

Many of those affected recover spontaneously as soon as they stop using the chemicals but for others in whom symptoms persist, treatments are limited.

Patients whose moods have been affected may be helped by therapy and anti-depressant drugs.

The authors say prevention is essential by ensuring levels of solvents in the air are kept low and that workers wear masks.

They cite the case of a 50-year-old glazier who had spent his professional life working with solvents but never used a respirator and had only worn gloves for two years.

He suffered numb fingers, headaches, dizziness, depression and impotence.

He was advised to stop work and one year later reported a remarkable improvement in mood and said the outside world seemed clearer.

However, he still felt irritable, had a poor memory and had lost his sense of smell.

## DAILY POEM

## Poem of the Summer Angels

for Annette - who lent me the Round House for two perfect days

By William Haywood

They came so gently I was not afraid  
Nor spent in dizzy and remote excess  
They came in every swimming of the light  
Among the beech cathedrals, where each bell  
Rings out its certain note. They came like bees  
Seducing the enraptured peonies.  
They came in silences as cool as lakes  
Under a woodland moon, where wild duck make  
Quick shafts across the sky or nightlong doze  
In reedy pools that cup the rippling stars.  
They came like buried childhoods in the hills  
The bird-tongued air, the land that walks away  
To solitudes stronger than any gods.  
They came in peace, to tell me what I know.  
May they come so for you.

This poem completes our selection from *Earth Ascending*, edited by Jay Ramsay (Stride, £9.50). On Monday, 28 April, we will publish the winning poem in the 1997 Peterloo Poets open competition: *Alice and the Birds*, by Anna Crowe.

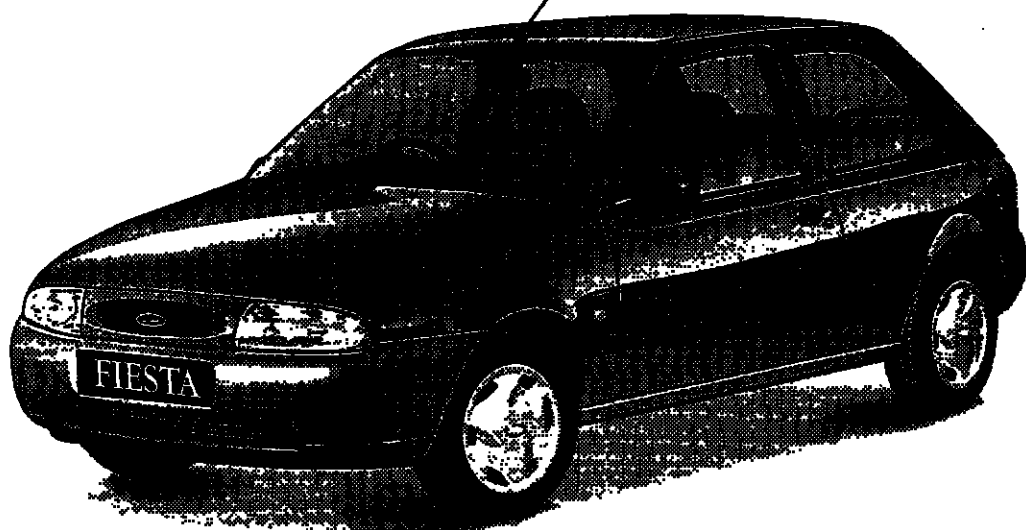
Petronella Wyatt  
runs off with  
Imran Khan.

"THE WOMAN CALLED OUT, 'ELEANOR, IT'S THAT JEMIMY.' ELEANOR PULLED AT MY JACKET. 'DON'T YOU LOOK SMART. BUT WHERE'S YOUR OLD MAN?'"

Petronella Wyatt goes in search of the Goldsmith campaign against David Mellor in Putney and gets mistaken for Jemima Khan. Plus other local election lunacy. Only in *The Spectator*, out today.

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An ice-pack for the brow of a fevered electorate

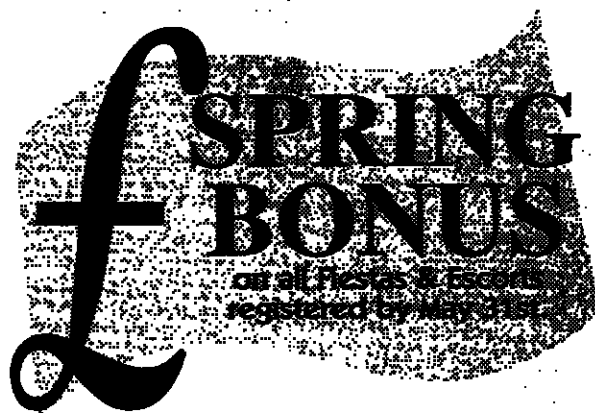
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# election '97

## Tories use tax as the fear factor

Party leaders trade blows over fiscal policy

Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

An exchange of Labour "fibs" and Tory "evasions" marked the start of the final week of election campaigning yesterday as John Major and Tony Blair tried to scare the voters.

The Conservative leader warned that if Labour was elected, their promised July Budget would include a tax package that could raise £12bn. The Labour leader said later that the Conservatives were addicted to value-added tax, and they planned to slap VAT on food.

Mr Major denied any intention of doing that, bluntly calling the Labour allegation "a lie". But he did not answer a direct question about extending VAT to other basic items, like children's clothes, or books.

"We have no need to raise taxation," he said. "We have set out spending plans and taxation plans and there is no need to get involved in ruling out VAT. I do not believe it is going to be necessary."

Mr Major said: "What is now self-evidently the case is that they propose to spend the last week of this campaign frightening the sick, frightening the elderly, frightening the vulnerable by spreading deliberate fibs and scare stories they know have absolutely no basis whatsoever."

As for Labour warnings that the Tories proposed to privatise state pensions, Mr Major said that was "absolutely scurrilous".

Conservative governments had up-rated the state pension each year, and would continue to do so, he said. "There is not a shred of basis in fact for the scares they have been putting about," he added.

But while both leaders have attacked each other for using scare tactics, both yesterday tried to put the frighteners on the electorate.

Referring to Labour's planned windfall tax on privatised utilities, Mr Major said it was a tax which "they cynically claim wouldn't hurt anybody".

He said that was not true. "It would put up the cost of mak-

ing a telephone call or heating a room with gas or electric stove. It would hit pensioners and cut the value of shares held by millions of savers."

That was just "for starters". Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, then issued a "mem" of tax increases that Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, could choose to use, to fill the alleged £12bn "black hole" between his spending and revenue plans.

He said that Labour would need to increase taxes by £640 a year for every household in the country to balance the books.

However, when Mr Major was asked for his plans on the tax burden, he did not answer the question, and the answers to repeated questions on VAT did not provide any assurance that the VAT base would not be extended, or that VAT rates would rise.

The shadow Chancellor said Mr Major had spent the election evading the answer. "From now until election day, the Prime Minister must be hounded until he matches Labour's commitment not to extend VAT to food, children's clothing, public transport fares, and books and newspapers."

"If he fails to do so, the British people will know what to expect from a fifth term Tory Government - more on VAT essentials."

Mr Blair told *The Independent* at his election press conference: "If we can get the tax burden down for ordinary families of course we want to do that. But we are wary of making guarantees to people precisely because we do not want to repeat the mistakes Mr Major made in the last election."

He added that he was also wary because "we are going to inherit a situation where the public finances are in a very, very poor state ..."

"But of course a 10 pence starting rate of [income] tax would help [ordinary families] and I think if we possibly can help them we should." He said that if there was scope for tax cuts under a Labour Government, that is where it would be done.

### Windfalls ripe for the picking

Kenneth Clarke set out a menu of options for Labour tax increases yesterday, but some of them would do just as well for a Tory Chancellor as a Labour one. Here is a list of choices facing a government of any complexion wanting to raise extra revenue.

Restrict personal allowances to basic rate	£1.8bn
Restrict pension tax relief to basic rate	£1.3bn
Abolish married couple's allowance	£2.8bn
Abolish mortgage interest relief	£2.4bn
Abolish exemption of child benefit from tax	£200m
Abolish exemption of incapacity benefit from tax	£550m
Extend VAT to private education and health	£1.5bn
Increase corporation tax rate by 1 percent	£650m
Cut rate of advance corporation tax credit by 1 percent	£250m
End tax exemption of first £20,000 redundancy pay	£1.3bn
Extend VAT to rent on domestic dwellings	£3bn
Extend VAT to rent on commercial properties	£1.3bn
Extend VAT to betting, gaming and lottery	£200m
Extend VAT to domestic passenger fares	£1.4bn
Extend VAT to international passenger fares	£1.2bn
Extend VAT to children's clothing	£800m
Extend VAT to water and sewerage services	£300m



Now we're really motoring: John and Norma Major trying out an XK8 during their visit to the Jaguar factory in Coventry. Photograph: Tom Pilstow

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major will make himself the message tonight with an election broadcast aimed at winning back doubting Tory voters.

The election broadcast was filmed last night at Downing Street by the Prime Minister who curtailed a day of campaigning in the Midlands and the North-east to begin a media blitz.

The Prime Minister's broadcast which will go out tonight will be in sharp contrast to Labour's "Tony Blair: The Movie" screened last night. The script was agreed by the Prime Minister after talks with Lord Saatchi late on Wednesday night during a return flight from Scotland.

"Our strategy is to show what it could be like under a Labour government. It is part of a big media push," said one senior Conservative source.

The Prime Minister will un-

## Major is the message in search for floaters

derline his warnings that a Labour government would threaten prosperity and sign up to a federal Europe - two issues which Tory strategists believe have been making wavering supporters think again in the final days of the campaign.

It will be followed up by the Prime Minister in a series of television interviews on Sunday, the BBC *Panorama* programme on Monday, and Radio 1 on Tuesday.

Tory party strategists believe Labour will enter the final week of the campaign by changing the emphasis to the "rewards" of a Labour government, focusing on their five pledges including

taking 250,000 young people off the dole.

That strategy was set out in Labour's "war book", but the Tories are keen to use Mr Major's personal popularity to persuade the "don't knows" to turn back to the Tories.

Mr Major privately concedes that he wished he had been able to speak more directly to more people but he continued to insist yesterday that the message on the doorstep was different from the polls.

He is refusing to give up in the face of expected defeat, as he did in 1992, although he is clearly looking as though the long campaign has taken its

toll on his reserves of energy.

He toured the Jaguar plant in Coventry with his wife, Norma, to underline the economic changes which have taken place since the days of Red Robbo and demarcation disputes. He sat behind the wheel of a Tory blue XK8 sports car costing £56,625 but Mrs Major, who drives a Rover, said: "John doesn't earn enough to buy a Jaguar."

If he loses next Thursday, that may change.

Mr Major has not been allowed to drive a car since becoming Prime Minister in November 1990, for security reasons, but he may be given

new freedom to do so if the Tories are forced into opposition.

He may also soon be able to afford the Jaguar.

Close friends have predicted that after delaying standing down to prevent an unseemly scramble for the leadership, he may go back to the City, possibly returning to his former career in banking.

It is possible he could still play an important role, even out of office, in the development of a single currency. Executives at Siemens have made it clear they support the single currency and Jaguar executives were also in favour of the "wait and see" approach.

Bibiano Boerio, the finance director of Jaguar, said: "From my personal perspective, it's probably something you need to keep shaping and managing."

"I'm a fighter and if you have an idea where you want to be, it's best to be involved and to help shape it."

## Blair targeted in the final push

Colin Brown

Tony Blair will be targeted for an intensified attack by Tory party leaders in the final push for the last seven days of the general election campaign.

Tory strategists privately say they have identified Mr Blair as one of the key targets, in order to undermine Labour's election campaign and restore confidence in floating Tory voters.

John Major will step up his assault on Mr Blair's U-turns over policy, including Scottish devolution, but will leave the more personal attacks to leading spokesmen, such as the party chairman, Brian Mawhinney.

The personal attacks on Mr Blair, which have included advertisements showing the

Labour leader as a ventriloquist's dummy on German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's knee, have caused outrage but Tory strategists believe they are striking a chord with voters.

"We are finding in our polls that people are increasingly concerned at Blair's changes of policy. He looks tetchy under fire. We think he is frightened by the prospect of office and we are confident that the contrast between Major and Blair is going to damage Labour," said one Tory source.

"There is a growing feeling that we are hitting home when we compare Steady John against Slippery Tony. We are appealing over the heads of the media and it is getting home to the people on the streets."

The campaign, which will intensify over the weekend, with no let-up by Mr Major on Saturday, will also focus on what the Tories claim is the "spiral of silence" by Labour over its economic plans, including a proposed June budget. They will attack Labour for failing to show where the money is going to come from to plug the alleged £1.5bn black hole in Gordon Brown's plans.

The economy has been the main theme of the Conservative campaign, with the slogan "Britain is Booming". Tory strategists believe the message is beginning to have its effect on the opinion polls but will also link it to evidence of widespread Euro-scepticism.

Mr Major will attack Mr

Blair for threatening to give away British sovereignty at the same time as risking more job losses. "We are going to go on Europe, Europe and Europe. Europe is big and doing us well," said the source.

Conservative tracking polls showed the gap with Labour fell from 11 to six-and-a-half per cent at the start of the week, after heavy attacks on Labour over Europe. Mirroring the ICM poll in the *Guardian*, the Tory tracking poll showed Labour's lead had slipped to five points, which the Tory strategists said had raised morale at Central Office. "We feel that we can really do it now."

Mr Major continued to play down the polls yesterday and said it was too early to say what

the result of the election would be. But he warned: "The election on the doorstep will be very hard fought."

Although he has professed his confidence that he will win, Mr Major said yesterday: "I don't think anyone can predict with any certainty what the result will be."

Last night, he launched the final push by staking his hopes for victory on a twin attack on Mr Blair over his approach to Europe and the Scottish parliament. In spite of Cabinet splits over Europe between Kenneth Clarke and Michael Howard, Conservative strategists believe the voters have discounted the disunity factor and that their Euro-sceptic message is sinking in.

## BNP election film censored by C4

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster correspondent

Channel 4 is refusing to show a British National Party election broadcast in full tonight even though the same broadcast will be shown largely uncensored by BBC and ITV.

The embarrassing disparity between the channels comes after broadcasters successfully challenged the Prolife Alliance, which is fielding 56 candidates in the election, over showing details of foetuses being aborted in its party political broadcast transmitted last night.

One of the sequences taken out of the BNP broadcast on Channel 4's insistence shows a London high street, and faces of black people who are identifiable, and the commentary asks "Do you want the rest of Britain to end up like this?"

The other shows a school in London's East End with signs in Urdu. Channel 4 argues that the scenes infringe Independent Television guidelines.

The BBC and ITV have not removed these sequences, but have taken out another in which a woman with three children is clearly identifiable. The BBC and ITV argue that they are not in breach of guidelines and that it would not be feasible to ask everyone shown in the broadcast whether the BNP had asked their permission to be filmed. This is the ground on which Channel 4 has censored the broadcast.

A spokesman for Channel 5 said last night: "We will be looking at both the ITV/BBC version and the Channel 4 version and decide whether either is legal and can be transmitted."

The confusion shows the lack of clarity of the law which is to be challenged by the Prolife Alliance after its High Court decision yesterday. The alliance attempted to challenge a BBC decision to remove almost half its five-minute broadcast on the grounds that it would offend public taste. The extracts showed various parts of the process of an abortion but Judge Dyson said that the BBC was quite entitled to rule that the extracts would offend.

The judge said he recognised that freedom of expression was an important human right, but, having seen the offending transmission, he supported the BBC's decision. He described the film, which includes footage of what he said were "mangled and mutilated" aborted foetuses, as "indeed shocking".

The offending sections were blurred over with a statement saying that the broadcasting authorities had censored it and "if something is so horrifying that we are not allowed to see it, then perhaps we should not be tolerating it".

Josephine Quintavalle, spokeswoman for the alliance, said: "We are taking advice about appealing to Europe but it is obviously too late for this broadcast. We see this as a wider issue than pro-life. We are very concerned that a few media people have control over political expression."

The alliance last night put the full uncensored version of the broadcast on its site on the internet.

### THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

#### THE CAMPAIGN

The Liberal Democrats began "Take Our Daughters to Work" day by highlighting new evidence from the Fawcett Society during the election campaign. The party launched its own plans to get a fair deal for women both at home and at work.

Meanwhile, the other two parties continued to trade fibes over pensions, VAT and the economy. While the Conservatives claimed Labour's plans would leave a £12bn "black hole" in the public finances, Labour claimed the Conservatives' plans would cost £15bn. Labour unveiled its eagerly-awaited video endorsement from businessman Alan Sugar before its leader, Tony Blair, promised the future of "one nation" politics for Britain.

Answering questions, Mr Blair repeated allegations that under the Conservatives the state pension would not be safe and that VAT could be imposed on such items as food and public transport. These claims were later hotly denied by the Conservatives.

John Major, meanwhile, removed himself to Coventry and Tescote, where he made a series of visits aimed at showing a booming economy.

He claimed Labour would put the country's competitiveness at risk by importing European-style industrial policies and tax levels - the European Social Model.

#### KEY ARGUMENTS

Both Labour and the Conservatives were in fighting mood.

Tony Blair began the day with the spectre of a fifth-term Tory government. "The choice is very simple. You either wake up [on 2 May] to the same old Tories who have got away with everything they wanted to, or a new start under Labour," he said.

Later Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, hit back. "A rabbit caught in the headlights looks positively relaxed when compared with Mr Blair answering a question on economics."

Meanwhile another Conservative, the Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, was content to leave personal attacks to his colleagues. He was more interested in blowing his own trumpet.

"Immodestly - you are allowed to be immodest in elections - I lay claim to being the most successful Chancellor of the Exchequer since the war," he told the BBC's *Today* programme.

Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' treasury spokesman, was in equally upbeat mood during a BBC radio phone-in.

"If the people of this country want a Liberal Democrat government - and millions do - they can still vote one in," he said.

#### GOOD DAY



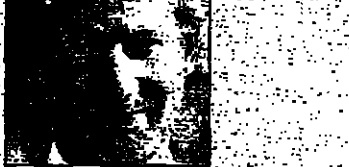
Paddy Ashdown got a boost when an opinion poll revealed 13 per cent of voters thought the Liberal Democrats had "run the most credible campaign so far".

Conservative MP John Grieve, who had been criticised for a "fist-bump" with Tony Blair, came out for the first time since the election. He said he was "delighted" to be back in the House of Commons and "looking forward to the debate on the economy".

#### ONE TO REMEMBER

Voters were offered something to look forward to yesterday when John Prescott announced that he and Tony Blair would dance round a maypole in Downing Street after the election in return for people coming out to vote. "Tony Blair and I will dance around that maypole in Downing Street - providing we get everyone out to vote," he told voters in Tynemouth. "So let's go around knocking on doors."

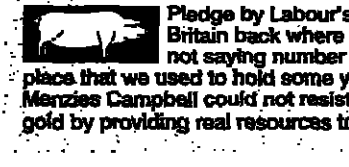
#### BAD DAY



Conservative candidate Jerry Hayes was recovering after being hospitalised for the second time in the election campaign. He made the mistake of sitting in his bed through a *Today* interview while delivering an election message. The dog on the other side was barking on leaflets and barking on the causes of leaflets.

Mr Hayes visited hospital earlier this month after being punched in the face by a stranger while he was canvassing.

#### HOGWASH



Pledge by Labour's Jack Cunningham: "Within a decade we could see Britain back where it should be, among the top 10 in the Olympics. I'm not saying number one or number two, but at least in the top 10, the place that we used to hold some years ago". Liberal Democrat sports spokesman Mercedes Campbell could not resist responding: "Only Liberal Democrats are going for gold by providing real resources to make the difference to sport in schools."

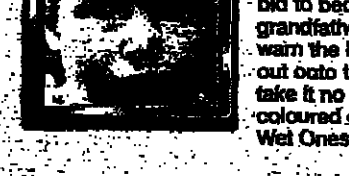
#### THE OTHER PARTIES

The Prolife Alliance lost its bid for permission to fight a decision by television stations to screen its party political broadcast. A High Court judge ruled that there were "no grounds" for a judicial review.

Meanwhile, today sees the launch of the Elvly Yours party. Included in their

revolutionary manifesto will be plans to introduce compulsory IQ tests for MPs, installing a slesazometer in the Commons, the abolition of Council Tax to be replaced by a special tax on the lecture tours of Margaret Thatcher. The only problem is that they have launched the party too late to field any candidates.

#### MEDIA STAR



Sulaiman Khan has more reason than the rest of us to be sick of the campaign. First his father, Imran Khan, launched a bid to become Prime Minister of Pakistan. Then his grandfather, Sir James Goldsmith, took it upon himself to warn the British people of the threat from Europe. Wheeled out onto the campaign trail on Putney Heath, Sulaiman could take it no more, and was sick all over his mother's chocolate-coloured dress, sending fazed party officials scurrying for the Wet Ones.

Vote for insanity, you know it makes sense

Matthew Brace

Britain is not booming, it is barking-barking mad. Ask anyone standing on Westminster Bridge yesterday afternoon in the presence of Screaming Lord Sutch and 30 candidates standing for his Official Monster Raving Loony Party.

With the slogan "Vote for insanity: you know it makes sense", Lord Sutch launched his party's manifesto, spelling out a brighter future for the nation.

On health: free prescriptions, dental treatment and hearing aids and the compulsory wearing of wigs. On crime: standard-issue tandems for traf-



Mad? John-Major lookalike Peter Friel posing with Monster Raving Loony 'Batwoman' on Westminster Bridge yesterday Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

fic police involved in high-speed pursuits. On education: a return to basics - the four Rs of reading, writing, rock and roll. And, on the burning issue of Europe: butter mountains to be made available for training British Olympic skiers, a ministry for

pets to be responsible for issuing passports, and a single currency, the yahoo.

Some Loony policies are not quite as mad as they make out. A proposal to introduce special ramps on the backs of buses to allow easier access for the el-

derly and disabled was tested out by Steven Norris, the Conservatives' transport minister last year.

However, all is not well at Loony Headquarters - Bob's Goodtime Blues bar in west London. Lord Sutch himself,

veteran rock 'n' roll star and *bon vivant*, has had to pull out of his own personal campaign to look after his elderly mother who has suffered a fall. And another of his candidates has run into hostility. Organisers of an election meeting in the Bradford North

constituency last night banned Sutch's man, Wild Willi Beckett, from attending, saying they want to cover serious issues. Conservative, Lib Dem and Labour candidates will all get a fair hearing while Wild Willi is said to be wild with rage.

# Labour still 18 points ahead

John Rentoul

After the headlines generated by ICM's dramatic mid-week poll, today's *Independent*/Harris poll shows Labour's lead unchanged at 18 percentage points, in line with other polls painting a placid picture of public opinion.

But, while most pollsters are confident that the trend shown by ICM was due to statistical error, they are all nervous about the levels of party support.

Tom Simpson, managing director of Harris, is working on estimates of what would happen if there were a late swing to the Conservatives of the same order as in 1992. On average, the final polls were nine points adrift then, with about one-third of the error down to out-of-date information about the make-up of the electorate. So if voters have the same last-minute change of heart as five years ago, Labour's lead may end up being six points lower than in the opinion polls.

"Now the same factors may not be at work, but it would be a legitimate exercise to do alongside our final poll next week," Mr Simpson said. But on Harris's numbers today it would only cut Labour's lead to 12 points, and leave Tony Blair with a Commons majority of just over 100 seats.

The unusual feature of Harris's polls in the run-up to this election is that the number of don't knows has risen during the campaign, instead of falling as expected. From 12 per cent five weeks ago, 16 per cent are now saying they do not know how they will vote.

This feature, reflected in other polls, has been seized on by the Tories as evidence that there is "all to play for". But many of these are already counted by the pollsters as "shy Tories" on the basis of how they say they voted last time, and who they think the best prime minister would be. Only MORI refuses to make this adjustment.

Today's *Independent*/Harris survey also continues to suggest the Labour vote is firmer than the Tories'. Of Labour voters, 80 per cent say they are "certain to vote Labour", while only 60 per cent of Tories say they are "certain to vote Conservative". Twice as many Tories (29 per cent) as Labour supporters (15 per cent) say "there is a chance that I may change my mind before I vote".

The Liberal Democrats are the most popular second choice among potential switchers (28

per cent of waverers name the Lib-Dems, 17 per cent Labour, 14 per cent Tories).

There remains the puzzle of why ICM consistently put Labour lower, and the Tories and Liberal Democrats higher, than the other polls. Nick Sparrow, ICM managing director, attributes the difference to random telephone interviewing. But Gallup, which uses the same method, produces results more in line with the other companies whose interviewers speak to people face-to-face. Andy Brown, head of research at Gallup, claims his methods are superior to ICM's because telephone numbers are generated at random by computer, while ICM take numbers at random from telephone directories and then add another random number to the last digit. "ICM's method means they get fewer ex-directory numbers, because we know that ex-directory numbers tend to cluster together," Mr Brown said.

He added that, surprisingly, the one-third of the population which is ex-directory is more pro-Labour, reflecting the fact that they tend to be younger, unmarried, in rented housing and less likely to be in professional occupations.

Meanwhile, analysis of the last local council by-elections before the general election by Colin Rallings and Michael Thrasher of Plymouth University, suggests a Labour lead of 13 points. This is lower than the opinion polls, but what is heartening for the Tories is that the same analysis just before the general election five years ago put the two main parties neck and neck. If that relationship holds good this time, Labour would win the general election by the same sort of margin at the five point lead in this week's ICM poll, pointing to a Labour majority of around 40 seats.

Harris Research interviewed 1,177 adults face-to-face in their homes between 18 and 21 April.

## Lib Dems beat Tories in the campaign style

John Rentoul

The Liberal Democrats have beaten the Tories into third place when voters are asked which party has "run the most effective campaign so far", according to a MORI opinion poll.

In direct contrast to media commentators' view that Tony Blair has fought an uninspiring and error-prone campaign, 36 per cent of those surveyed said Labour had run the best campaign. Labour was well ahead of the Liberal Democrats on 13 per cent, who pushed the Tories into third place on 11 per cent. The findings of the poll, carried out on Tuesday this week for the *Times*, are also at odds with the trend in party support in the polls over the five weeks of the campaign so far. Labour's average level of support has fallen slightly from just above 50 per cent when John Major called the election in mid-March to just below 50 per cent now.

But Paddy Ashdown's greater exposure during the campaign seems to have helped lift the Liberal Democrats, who have seen their poll ratings rise over the past five weeks. The average Tory poll rating has also risen slightly during the campaign, despite voters giving Mr Major's campaign a big thumbs-down.

Again contradicting most commentators, who have been impressed with the Prime Minister's bold and personal appeal to the nation, fewer voters are impressed by the Tory campaign

this time than were five years ago. Comparing the figures with those published on 30 March 1992, at the same stage of the last election campaign, suggests that Mr Ashdown is in fact doing worse than last time. In 1992, the Tories came in third on 13 per cent, but the Liberal Democrats were named by 28 per cent, only just behind the 31 per cent naming Neil Kinnock's second and more stilled Labour campaign.

This time, much of the media's attention has been taken by Mr Blair's uncertain start to the campaign. He was reported to be defensive in his *Panorama* interview with David Dimbleby and the "wobble" over the late change to party policy on privatisation attracted much coverage. Mr Ashdown is generally held to have had a good campaign. When given airtime, he is said to come across exceptionally well and Liberal Democrat policies are popular when people know about them.

Mr Major also impressed journalists with his decision to turn disunity over Europe into an impassioned plea to his party and the country to trust him to negotiate with Britain's European partners.

The other big difference between now and five years ago is that in 1992 only 26 per cent of those interviewed replied "none of them" or "don't know", against 37 per cent now.

Once again, it seems, the don't knows have it.

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John Rentoul



# Ashdown ditches campaign for crusade

Barrie Clement

Ahead of one of the most intensive campaigns conducted by a British politician, Paddy Ashdown last night launched what he described as a crusade for a new politics. Casting aside any suggestion that the electorate might vote tactically to get rid of the Conservatives, Mr Ashdown called on electors to maximise the vote for Liberal Democrats throughout the country.

A vote for his party was a vote for "victory," he told a rally in Edinburgh. "Facially accepting that there was no chance of him entering 10 Downing Street, he made it clear that the victory he had in mind was a 'massive force' of Liberal Democrat MPs who would fight for real improvements in education and the health service. While Mr Ashdown's party has picked up support during the hustings, most polls put them three or four per-

centage points behind the 18 per cent vote they attracted in the last general election.

The speech was meant to launch the last seven days of his campaign, during which he will visit 30 constituencies all over the country. Mr Ashdown will once more don his man-of-action mantle in the three days up to polling day, dashing around in a helicopter. Next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday he will visit more than 20 seats.

Betraying a degree of irritation over suggestions by disillusioned Tory and Labour supporters that a vote for the Liberal Democrats was "wasted," he said the only vote which counted was for policies people believed in.

"If you want better schools, then the only way you will get them is by voting Liberal Democrat. The vote that doesn't count, that won't make the difference, is the Conservative or Labour vote - because they

won't do anything about the cuts, the sacked teachers, the rising classes in our schools."

There was very little to choose between Labour and the Tories - they had the same spending limits, the same tax plans and the same failure to explain how improvements would be paid for. The Liberal Democrats attached price tags to their promises, he said.

"The Labour Party has decided to fight this election on the same-old message: New Labour - no difference." Both Tories and Labour made impossible promises of lower taxes and better services, he said, pointing out that they had been in power for 50 years, but neither had made any real difference. "Don't vote for more of the same. Don't be conned into voting from fear, vote for the things you believe in."

He said it was time for more than just a campaign. "Campaigns are short-term. They are about winning votes. Crusades are about beliefs. They are about the long term."

Given that his party had been out of power for half-a-century, Mr Ashdown named Gladstone and Lloyd George as role models for his new politics. Earlier in the day, Mr Ashdown visited the 1,600-pupil Cockburn Hill comprehensive school in Yardley, a three-way marginal in Birmingham. The headteacher, David Gentle, showed him a newly built science block which had cost £500,000 but which teachers believed was badly designed.

## The silent revolutionaries



Battle-hardened: Tony Benn in his Chesterfield constituency. "I'm a soldier in the middle of a war. I wouldn't want to discuss my view of the generals" Photograph: David Rose

Kathy Marks

The fax machine in the kitchen of Tony Benn's constituency home whirs into action. "Ah, here come my instructions from Millbank Tower, telling me what to say about everything," he observes. "They get sent to all the candidates twice a day. I file them away very carefully."

## Tea-drinking prophet keeps his profile low and expectations high

again, Mr Benn has never been noted for being a conformist. The prophet of the hard left is fighting his seventeenth campaign. He entered Parliament in 1950, when Tony Blair was not yet a twinkle in his father's eye, and has more ministerial experience than any other MP in the Labour ranks.

Now 72, Mr Benn has no plans to retire. One reason is his attachment to Chesterfield, the former mining town that gave him refuge after he lost his Bristol constituency. He has even been spotted this week wearing a blue rosette

- in support of his local Second Division football team, which made it to the FA Cup semi-finals. "There is something to be said for experience without ambition," he says, puffing on his pipe. "Anyway, there are nine million pensioners and they're entitled to be represented in Parliament."

It must be said that Tony Benn looks fighting fit. He darts around his flat in the grounds of Chesterfield Labour Club, making endless cups of the drink that fuels him from morning to night: tea. "They've

introduced a new pyramid tea bag, have you seen them?" he enthuses. On the wall is a painting of a Yorkshire pit village, a present from Arthur Scargill. He rails with unflagging energy against his favourite demons: Brussels, the global economy, the profit motive. The only hint of declining mental agility comes when he tries to recall the country where Kenneth Kaunda was president. "This is what they call a senior moment. It'll come back to me in the night."

This is the man who 18 months ago accused Mr Blair of trying to destroy socialism. In 1992, he said the Labour Party had lost the election because it was too right wing. But for now, like others on the far left, Mr Benn is keeping his own counsel. "I'm a soldier in the middle of a war," he says. "If I was putting on my tin hat and getting into the landing craft on D-Day, I wouldn't want to discuss my view of the generals. At the moment, the most important thing is to get rid of a government that has inflicted the most horrific damage on this country."

## ... while Red Ken goes on a Millbank diet

Kim Sengupta

Ken Livingstone was not saying anything much - not just because his mouth was full of *masala dosa* in the Indian cafe, but because the MP for Brent East is on the Millbank diet. Apparently, Labour's spin doctors did not want the caustic critic of new Labour to be too voluble during the election campaign. So he is on a vow of silence. For the ever so loquacious former GLC leader, this is akin to a vow of celibacy by Steven Norris.



Bread and butter socialist: Ken Livingstone, who is finding new Labour not entirely to his taste Photograph: Brian Harris

"In 1992 they told me not to speak for five weeks," said Mr Livingstone. "This time no orders have arrived from Millbank. They don't directly send me any memos any longer, because I would tell them to sod off. But I am not going to say anything now, I don't want to be blamed if things go wrong. I may have plenty to say come May 2."

So though we have conducted an interview with him, it was entirely off the record. Here is how New Labour likes Ken to be quoted. What about his views on the leadership? He was hardly complimentary:

"He said: 'He could scarcely hide his amusement as he continued: "I'm not going to say anything now, I don't want to be blamed if things go wrong. I may have plenty to say come May 2."

described the reaction he got whenever he walked into Millbank: "before adding: 'And that's what comes of too much spin doctoring.' But what about the grip of the spin doctors on the campaign? At an earlier lunch, Mr Livingstone's friend

the crucifix." Mr Livingstone's public reticence on new Labour has excited his Tory opponent Mark Francois: "He has new Labour on his campaign leaflets, but we all know what he feels about

born in Islington and says he works in the defence industry. He said: "I am fighting this seat to win. I was adopted in 1995, and I have had two years to work at this. Europe has become the key issue now, and Ken Livingstone is an Euro-Federalist. I am against a monetary union. I do not believe the huge lead Labour has got in the opinion polls and I think we have got a very good chance."

Mr Livingstone has a majority of 5,971. And his fervently Europhile stance, say the locals, is unlikely to dent this. Even Tory voters cannot seem to help feeling a sneaking respect for him. Shopping at Willesden Lane, Margaret Cameron, a former bank worker aged 36, said: "I voted Tory last time. But this time I shall be voting for Ken Livingstone. I know his politics are a bit to the left, but he is an honest man. I am seeking and tired of all the corruption surrounding the Tories. I know Ken Livingstone would never accept any brown envelopes."

Shopkeeper Eddie Goodall, another former Conservative, would not be voting at all this time. "I voted for Maggie, but I cannot vote for John Major. I cannot go for Labour, because they do not seem to stand for anything at all. No, I am not that worried about the Labour left, Red Ken is meant to be left, but I have to admit he has been a bloody good constituency MP," he said.

## HOW I WILL VOTE: MARK WIGGLESWORTH

### Searching for a sense of society

Mark Wigglesworth, conductor, is Music Director of the *Premiere Ensemble* and the *BBC National Orchestra of Wales*. He has worked with many of the world's leading orchestras including the *Berlin Philharmonic* and the *London Philharmonic*.

What do you think of Paddy Ashdown? To be honest I don't think the people are that important: it's the philosophies that matter, and he embodies the philosophy of the party. All the leaders are intelligent people, but it's not so much a question of who they are, as what they believe in. Paddy Ashdown believes in a sense of community, a sense of society and a sense of future, though not just the immediate future.

How will you be voting? Liberal Democrat

Why? Europe is important. I think they are the only party that sees Europe in terms of political co-operation. The other two parties are only interested in selling Europe in terms of how it benefits us as individuals. The whole idea that it could be good for people to work together is never really discussed. The Tories and Labour will only sell it to us if it is going to benefit our pockets.

Generally all the policies that the two main parties are selling are based on selfishness. That's very depressing: that people should vote based on what is best for them, rather than what is best for the community. The idea that tax is a dirty word is, I think, extraordinary. It benefits everybody to have good services. The amount of extra tax they are talking about is so little for the individual. People might think that they don't benefit from the transport system if they use their car, or they don't benefit from education if they don't have children, but we all benefit if society is strong.

The idea of co-operation and the fact that people may not simply be interested in their own bank accounts is an issue that only the Lib Dems are prepared to lead on. People only think they can make these promises because they will never get elected, but they seem the only party who see politicians as leaders rather than followers. The other parties react to the polls and do whatever people want in order to get elected whereas the Liberal Party sticks its neck out in a far more admirable way.

What do you think of tactical voting? I'm all for tactical voting. I don't need to do it in my constituency because the Liberals are in second place. But I think Labour is closer to the Liberal Party than the Tories. What I'd really like is for neither Labour nor the Tories to get a majority: then PR might become a reality. I think Tony Blair's attitude to PR will be conditioned by his majority. If he has a landslide victory there is no way PR will be high on his agenda. If he needs the Liberals then it probably will be, and I find that depressing because his hand will have been forced, but the outcome is a potentially exciting one.

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## election '97

## Labour wants sports gold

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

Labour has come up with the ultimate election promise – Britain would bring home Olympic gold under a Blair government, the party's heritage spokesman said yesterday.

"Within a decade we could see Britain back where it should be – among the top 10 in the Olympics. I'm not saying number one or number two, but at least in the top 10, the place that we used to hold some time ago," Jack Cunningham said.

He was pinned down to a specific pledge by Tom McNab, the

British Olympic coach, at the launch of Labour's sporting plans. Mr McNab had gone along, with a bevy of other sporting stars, to support the party's plans.

Acknowledging that things, to coin a phrase from Labour's campaign song, could only get better for Britain's sportsmen and women, Mr Cunningham blamed the Conservatives.

"We have examined the reasons why. We are not short of talent. We can fairly point the finger at the failure of the Tory government to nurture sporting achievement," he said.

Labour, he went on, would

put Britain back in the world sports superleague. Furthermore, it would fight to bring the World Cup and other major international events to Britain.

Among the guests at the launch was the runner Brendan Foster, who won numerous medals under the last Labour government including the gold in the 10,000 metres at the 1978 Commonwealth Games.

Mr Foster was joined by Tessa Sanderson, who threw the javelin at five Olympics and won gold at Los Angeles in 1984. Also present was Shaun Edwards, former captain of the Great Britain rugby league

team, Brian Moore, former England rugby union player and Judy Oakes, the international shot-putter.

Ms Sanderson said afterwards that she had voted Conservative at the last election but that she would be supporting Labour this time.

"Britain is very talented at sport. There are a lot of kids out there at grassroots who aren't getting the opportunities and I think Labour will try to do that," she said.

Labour has promised a range of measures, from a new emphasis on children's play to a new youth sports unit in the De-

partment of National Heritage.

In a new document, *Labour's Sporting Nation*, the party called yesterday for an end to the sale of school playing fields, a more strategic approach to grants for sport, a better British Academy of Sport than the one offered by the Conservatives and a task-force for football.

Iain Sprouat, the sports minister, was not impressed. "Funnily enough they said nothing about these issues until after we announced our comprehensive plans. It is time for sports fans up and down the country to show Labour the red card," he said.



Family matters: The Goldsmith clan, Sir James, Annabel carrying Sulaiman and Jemima, on the campaign trail yesterday. Photograph: Brian Harris

Clare Garner

Maybe Sulaiman was trying to say something. First dad. Now granddad. All of a sudden, Sulaiman – who has spent the first five months of his life canvassing *ad nauseam* – was physically sick.

His mother, Jemima Goldsmith, mopped up the mess from her chocolate-coloured velvet sleeves. To her it was baby business as usual, but to the entourage of Referendum Party stage managers, it was an interruption for which they were ill-prepared.

While yesterday's stroll on the edge of Putney Heath may not have been quite what Sulaiman had had in mind when his mother tucked him up in his baby Gap gear, he has little choice.

Jemima explained: "I can't really leave him behind. I haven't got anyone to leave

## Family outing to sell granddad's message

him with," no doubt striking a chord with many a single mother. Mother and son were out campaigning with Sir James, who is fighting Putney, and David Mellor on his referendum crusade.

Sulaiman has been on the political beat since "day one."

He is, according to Jemima, "remarkably unfazed" about being hauled around the houses. "I think he enjoys it," she said. "I think he gets bored now sitting in a nursery."

The electioneering in Pakistan was certainly good practice for Sulaiman, who even

knew how to handle the men with long lenses. "Can you look to your right, please," yelled a snapper as the family posed for the press. The youngest subject was first to obey his orders.

Jemima continued: "This is a bit public for me. I'd prefer to go on my own, door to door with a pram... actually, it's difficult to talk to people when there are press around."

Whether or not it was down to the presence of the press, Jemima spoke far more passionately about her son than the Referendum Party yesterday.

"He goes everywhere with

me," she said, adjusting her veil and his hood simultaneously. "He's attached to me. He's a good boy, really. He's so easy. He's portable."

And when asked whether having Sulaiman on board helped to break the ice on doorsteps, she admitted: "It helps me, I don't know whether it helps other people."

Jemima was determined, however, to appear more than a mere puppet on daddy's string.

Challenged on whether she, herself, held strong views on Europe, she replied: "Of course I

do. Why do you think I'm here? It's not just because I am my father's daughter that I'm doing this. I've got more convictions than that."

Unlike some other people she could name. "The biggest crime is the politicians changing their views minutes before the election."

While her canvassing practice in Pakistan seemed to come in handy, Jemima refused to be drawn into making parallels between canvassing with her husband and her father.

"It's a separate campaign," she insisted.

But the Mellor camp was quick to proffer a parallel. A spokeswoman at the campaign office said there was no point in panicking about Jemima's presence in Putney. "We don't see it as a threat," she said.

"She (Jemima) did it for her husband – and it didn't do him much good."



by Anonymous

**D** minus 7. Nipper was explaining the Mawhinney Bounce to Auntie; about how you take a low grade story (in this case an ancient leak) and use it to bounce your opponent's good news stories off the evening bulletins. To do it successfully, he told her, you needed total shamelessness; a shamelessness that he didn't entirely despise.

Actually Auntie understood it all perfectly well, but she indulged the boy, sensing that he needed to talk. Waiting for the big event of the day to start – and with the moment of decision so close – all of them lived from minute to minute, poll to poll. By this hour, seven days from now, several million voters from Stirling to the Scillies would already have made their decisions.

Out of habit she took yet another look at the gathering piranhas. Placing themselves in a fleshy wedge at the side and centre of the hall were the TV bigwigs; the guys whose reputations within their industries rested upon their performance in these few weeks.

The largest and most influential of them she had dubbed "Uncle Herbert", after her mother's brother. That Herbert – when attending family get-togethers – had cultivated the habit of taking up the whole of a very large sofa, his padded thighs wide apart, jovially rebuking his relatives in very loud voice.

Yesterday this Uncle Herbert had taken up an extra minute of everyone's time by correcting the second page of a party press release, (one that had been written by a harassed Prodigy very late at night).

"I was under the impression," he had said, his voice redolent with ponderous humour, "that 'Achilles' was spelled with a capital 'A', and – the last time I looked – 'heel' had two 'e's'."

"So does 'arsehole'," Big Al had whispered in her ear.

And there was the frizzy-haired assistant editor of the major establishment newspaper, a woman used – since earliest childhood – to being told (correctly) how brilliant she was. In press conferences this confidence exhibited itself in publicly pointing out interesting things that she had noticed to her colleagues, and to the politicians.

Auntie turned away from Nipper. A jovial Mr Brown was introducing a list of eminent switchers (some of whom she had actually heard of) who were now enthusiastically endorsing the Candidate.

Then there was the filmed message from the rough diamond entrepreneur, whose

videoclip told the assembly that he liked the Candidate because "he was really up for it, aggressive, longing for it."

He certainly was. When he entered and walked through the middle of the room she realised she was witnessing the transformation of the man that she had known from politician to celebrity; a celebrity who – once the campaign was over – she might never know again.

Once in government qualities other than loyalty and friendship would be needed. This she knew.

Auntie watched him shun the microphone, and stand as close as possible to his audience – speaking fluently without notes about his vision of Britain. She loathed adulation, but he was now a complete star: young, handsome, keen and honest.

Had Lord Lloyd Webber defected, she could easily imagine specially composed music swelling, and the Candidate advancing down the aisle, pausing, and then breaking into song – his tuneful baritone telling the world of his love of country and his wishes for future generations. At the appropriate point she. Big Al, Nipper, Queen Mum, Blind Lemon Blunkett, Mr Brown and Friend Bobby would all add their voices, until even Uncle Herbert and the piranhas had to join in the chorus. Like that scene out of that movie starring Liza Minnelli. If only the voters could see what she saw.

But they couldn't. Fifty minutes later they drove out of London in one of the big battlebuses, its sides covered in cheerful and highly

coloured slogans. But as they went no-one waved, no-one cheered, no-one jeered or shouted.

On the posterless streets of mile after mile of sullen suburbs there was nothing but the billboards. Behind these blank doors and windows were the millions who would soon decide whether the Candidate would be able to offer his country anything other than his resignation. What the hell were they thinking?

At seven she was back at HQ to collect her coat and bag before escorting the Candidate to the TV studios for his latest big performance. On her way out she passed by a TV screen showing the familiar bars of an opinion poll graphic. This one gave her party 63%, the Grey Man's lot 27% and the Marine 2% – a lead of 36%! Was she dreaming?

"Take no notice," said a small voice. "It's only Sky's 'just a bit of fun' phone-in poll. It's funny, but we still don't really know what's going on out there."

Had Lord Lloyd Webber defected, she could easily imagine specially composed music swelling

## Refusenik loses fight for the right not to vote

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

It is a quintessentially English dispute. In one corner, a determined home counties non-voter who, disillusioned with politics, demands that his name be removed from the electoral register. In the other, the forces of bureaucracy. They refuse doggedly to comply – solely, it appears, because they do not believe they have to.

The issue has given rise to an extraordinary 15-month correspondence between our hero, who wishes to remain anonymous, and the authorities.

This electoral refusenik, who lives in Hampshire, has no wish to evade taxation or to break the law. He merely wishes formally to renounce his right to vote. The nub of his problem is that while it is not unlawful not to

appear on the register, it is unlawful not to fill in the registration form. And filling in the form leads, inexorably, to missing the point," he replied.

His first foray into the narrow world of local electoral bureaucracy took place in November 1995. He had been on the roll since the 1960s, but now his anger at what he describes as "a bizarre and lugubrious search for political leadership... among the floating voters" got the better of him. He asked to be removed from the draft electoral register.

The request brought a swift but predictable response from a junior council official. Householders were required to fill in their details on "Form A", it said. These details could be placed on a register of "other electors", if there was a good case for suppressing them.

As he had already filled in the form, Mr. No was not impressed. "With the greatest respect, your letter seems to miss the point," he replied.

"Can we now move on to more profitable ground?" "I formally abrogate my voting rights and do not wish to be a voter... This does not mean that I do not want to vote but rather that I do not even wish to be associated with the constituency of voters. I am terminating all association with the body politic and refuse to appear as any form of elector."

The reply was curt: "Thank you for your letter... I have retained your name on the Register of Electors as required by Law. Yours Faithfully."

The refusenik tried again: "Dear Sir. Not good enough. I shall take the matter further through the Parliamentary

Ombudsman. Yours Faithfully."

And so he did. In a long, eloquent missive he made his case pungently. "It is only if the elector rejects participation in the circus that Parliamentarians will recognise the extent of [their] folly," he thundered. But to no avail.

The reply was longer, but no more helpful. The Parliamentary Ombudsman could not help, it said. Try the Local Government Ombudsman.

And so, again, he did. Again, a lengthy reply, this time from an "investigator". Again, no joy. The Local Government Ombudsman, it said, could not help. No injustice had taken place that would justify an investigation.

This time the refusenik took to the telephone.

His call to the district council drew a response from its

solicitor, but still little progress. It was now October 1996. He should wait for the new draft register to appear in November and then object, it suggested. And so, again, he did. On 7 December. Then he waited for a reply. And waited.

Finally, on 14 March, his patience broke. He telephoned the council to complain. Another three weeks went by. The election campaign began. On 9 April, came a response, again from the solicitor. "On looking through the file I have to acknowledge that I have let you down. I have somehow got it into my head that your appeal lay with the County Court... I appreciate this is a matter you again may wish to take up with

the Ombudsman," it said. To add insult to injury, it suggested he wait until the 1997 draft register appeared in November.

The refusenik's reply last weekend was more in sorrow than in anger. "Let me ask you a simple question – it is rhetorical. I do not crave a reply, only silent reflection," he began. "Is the act of not voting a clear and unequivocal proof of the elector's rejection of the election?"

If so, how did the solicitor feel about the fact that between 70 and 80 per cent of voters did not turn out at local elections? Was he apprehensive? Or did he, like the politicians, not really care?

"You have successfully frustrated me," he concluded. "Justice delayed is justice denied."

## Ashdown stumped by question of men-only list of new peers

Anthony Revins  
Political Editor

Paddy Ashdown was stumped yesterday by the contrast between his call for a fair deal for women and his own decision to nominate three men for life peerages in last week's honours list.

Opening an election press conference on the party's policies to help women at work and home, the Liberal Democrat leader said: "There could be no greater symbol of the need to change the male-dominated House of Commons in that in the Commons we have a shoot-

But when *The Independent* asked him why he had chosen not to elevate Emma Nicholson to the House of Lords last week, picking three men instead, Mr Ashdown said: "Because she's an MP."

As Parliament has been dissolved, there are no MPs, and because Emma Nicholson defected to the Liberal Democrats from the Conservative benches, as MP for Devon West and Torridge, she has been left with no seat to contest in the current election campaign.

Pressed again to explain why he had picked three men for life peerages – Sir David Steel, Sir

were all people who had given long and distinguished service to the party.

The press conference theme was designed to coincide with National Take Our Daughters to Work Day – a scheme to provide young girls with an idea of the world of work.

Diana Maddock, the party spokeswoman on women and family policy, said: "Over 11 million women will go to work today."

"They will be joined at work by thousands of teenage girls observing their mums and dads at work."

"Sadly, too often, they will see

ble hours, low pay and poor maternity rights. These 'glass ceilings' must be shattered."

She said that the party policy for women at home would offer an acceleration of the equitable splitting of pensions on divorce, the introduction of a career's benefit, and improvement in the availability of refuge places for women fleeing from violent partners.

For women at work, the party promised free pre-school places for all three- and four-year-olds, encouragement of more child-care provision by extending tax relief, and an extension of employment and



**THE SOUL OF THE PARTY**

Photographer David Modell has spent two years on the trail of the Tories. His pictures capture the temper of the Party as it approaches another

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PUT PEN  
TO PAPER

WHICH WAY 139 TOP WRITERS  
WILL VOTE AND WHY

WHAT'S GOING ON?

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HURTER DAVIES, ALAN CLARK, JOHN PILGER, JONATHAN COE,  
NICELLA LAWSON AND 130 OTHERS. AVAILABLE AT WHSMITH.



# Middle England swayed by rootless tree

Michael Streeter  
finds Redditch  
influenced by  
Tories' broadcast  
attack on Labour

A perceived failure of the Labour Party to set the election campaign alight is influencing some disillusioned Conservatives to vote Tory again, according to *The Independent's* group of voters in a key marginal seat.

Some of the Redditch group – all former Conservative voters – regard John Major as conducting a more effective campaign and there are indications that the recent party election broadcast depicting new Labour as a "rootless tree" has struck a chord.

Promisingly for Tony Blair, his party's pledge to raise £1bn for the health services from the midweek lottery has been favourably received. But more ominously for him, there are signs that the state of the economy, and its prospects under a change of government, are playing more and more in the minds of so-called *Mondeo Man* across middle England.

The common ground between local Tory and Labour campaigners that the result in the Hereford and Worcester seat – where Labour needs a swing of just over 3 per cent to win – may be closer than indicated by national polls is also born out by the group's views. Among the undecided there is admiration for the Liberal Democrat policies, but a stronger slide towards staying with the Tories rather than trusting the uncertainty of a Labour government.

Steven Marriott, 28, had wanted to vote Labour for the first time but will now support the Tories. "The campaign has disappointed me, it's like they say a Punch and Judy show. I thought the parties were going to sell themselves but they're just bickering. I expected Tony Blair would have something to say." He is concerned about tax rises but has seen nothing from new Labour to inspire him.

Roger Jones, 42, an invoice manager, remains undecided but was swayed by the rootless tree broadcast. "I thought that was a vote getter and for me a real eye opener. It brought home that Labour change their policies all the time." He is waiting to see if Mr Blair can produce new policy initiative.

Another group member, Bid-



Fuel stop: A man concentrating on his food yesterday in the key marginal seat of Redditch

Photograph: Brian Harris

an Nicholls, 60, a butcher, has been more confused than enlightened so far. "The campaign has been very negative and more about one-upmanship." He had considered voting Labour but believes he will stick with "what I know" on the issues that matter most, trust and the economy, again citing the rootless tree broadcast.

The economy also concerned Lionel Baird, 52, a paramedic who had been determined to vote for Mr Blair but has switched back to Mr Major. "I'm looking to retire in five or six years and I'm really starting to think about what will happen to my investments. It all depends on growth and will that slow down under Labour? I'm worried they might think they won't get in again and so try to do too much too quickly and smuck it up."

However, toolmaker Andrew

Osiak, 45, who had wobbled over his new-found support for Labour, is now concerned about the Tory divisions over Europe. "They are split while Labour seem stronger and united."

He remains unconvinced by the campaign but has a different view of the economy from other group members. "John Major talks about a boom but there is no boom in Redditch. They say unemployment is falling but in Redditch there are more and more people in part-time jobs, they're constantly on the move yet they're classed as fully employed. I've been made redundant three times in the last few years. I don't agree that we can't do any better."

Susan Lovett, 38, a former sales consultant, was impressed by Labour's new lottery policy though she will still vote Tory. "It's a very clever move. A lot of

people including myself have always thought that the money should go to education or health rather than to the Churchill papers or the Royal Opera House."

Increasingly, her concern is for

**Major talks  
about a boom, but  
there is no boom  
in Redditch**

the economy, on which she simply does not trust Labour.

David Bignell, 51, a retired British Telecom engineer, is also impressed with the lottery scheme. "It's appealing though it's not really the responsibility of the lottery to do these

things, it should be the government." Locally he feels the Tories have offered nothing and is worried about the state of hospitals as well as the economy. But ultimately he will vote Tory again. "I do think it's about the right man for the job."

Cold-store operator Alan Tomes, 35, agrees. "I suppose it's just a gut feeling. I started to think more about the election and I believe that John Major is still the right man for the job. I trust him to make the right decision for the country, for example over the single currency."

Like many in the group he wants trade with the rest of Europe but is wary about more integration. Yet their general view concurred with the findings of Labour canvassers in Redditch that Europe interests voters, but is too confusing to be a determining factor.

With one week of the campaign to go Mark Redfearn, 29, an engineer, feels more unsure than ever about who to support and will probably sit down this weekend to decide. One of the narrow majority in the group of 13 who had initially decided to switch to Labour – only two are now "definite", suggesting a modest Labour win in Redditch – Mr Redfearn is unhappy with the party's "negative" campaign. "I saw the broadcast where they played 'Land of Hope and Glory' and it was rubbish. All they did was talk about the bad things not what they are going to do."

"I had made up my mind that I would never vote Conservative again and that I would vote Labour. But now I'm not so sure. Tony Blair has let me down a bit, cannot face issues and he skirts around them. I'm 50-50 at the moment."

# Lang in row over Scottish job fears

Stephen Goodwin

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, was accused of "juvenile scaremongering" yesterday after he contradicted the boss of Scotland's second largest insurance company on the firm's attitude to devolution.

The Conservatives are rattled by an apparent change of heart by both Scottish Widows and Standard Life, from coded warnings of job losses north of the border at the time of the 1992 election to one of business as usual under home rule.

Mike Ross, the chief executive of Scottish Widows which manages funds worth £24bn, has at least twice this year expressed a relaxed attitude to a Scottish parliament.

In March he said in a radio broadcast: "I don't see any particular threats in the winds, for example, from devolution." And on Wednesday the *Scotsman* newspaper reported Mr Ross as being "happy" with what he knew of Labour's proposals.

But Mr Lang insisted Scottish Widows were "against" devolution. A senior executive at the insurance company, who he repeatedly refused to identify, had told him the company "did not feel comfortable with the proposition."

"I have spoken to a senior executive at the Scottish Widows Fund and it is quite clear that the fund is extremely unhappy about the prospect of constitutional change and the other proposals of the Labour Party," Mr Lang said.

In a deftly-worded response, Mr Ross reiterated Scottish Widows' neutral stance. The company's overriding concern was to protect the interests of policy holders and it was "vital" that under any constitutional

arrangements there should be fiscal and regulatory cohesion across the UK for insurance, he said.

In common with any other business, Scottish Widows preferred to have as few changes to contend with as possible, but, Mr Ross concluded: "On the issue of devolution, we neither back it nor oppose it."

In 1992 Standard Life, Scotland's largest insurance company managing funds of totalling some £50bn, and Scottish Widows were accused of trying to influence employees' after indicating that some operations might be moved to England if there was home rule.

George Robertson, the shadow Scottish secretary, said Mr Lang should "put up or shut up. If he cannot name his sources he should not indulge in this rather juvenile scaremongering."

It was clear that the more companies learnt about Labour's devolution proposals the more comfortable they were with them, Mr Robertson said. "If one compares what Standard Life and Scottish Widows were saying at the last election on the record to what they are saying now, it is nothing less than a sea change in opinion."

Widening the charge to industry in general, Mr Lang said Labour's policies would destroy Scotland's reputation as an investment centre. In 1995-96 Scotland had attracted a record £1bn worth of investment and over 1,000 jobs a month had been created or safeguarded. "Within weeks" of a Labour victory, this flow would dry up, he said. But when pressed to name a single company that had told him it would leave Scotland or not invest if Labour devolved power to Edinburgh, he was unable or unwilling to do so.

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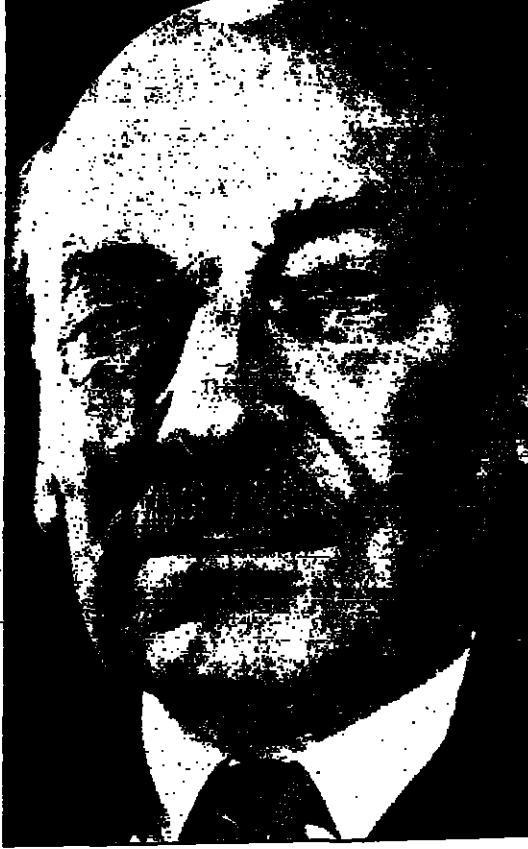
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# French left goes in search of a new ideology

Like Blair's Labour, the Socialists have moved right, writes John Lichfield



Common cause: Left-winger Lionel Jospin, centre, who could soon be leading France with Tony Blair in power in Britain. The last time Paris and London both had left-leaning leaders was in 1951, with French President Vincent Auriol, far left, and Labour Prime Minister Clement Attlee, left.

Paris — It is nearly half a century since Britain and France drove together, politically speaking, on the left side of the road. The last time Paris and London both had Socialist leaders was in 1951 (President Vincent Auriol and Prime Minister Clement Attlee).

Over the next five weeks, it is just possible that left-leaning governments will be elected at both ends of the Channel tunnel. (Near simultaneous, neighbouring elections are also unusual: 1974 was the last time it happened.)

The coincidence of polls

may be of no consequence to Tony Blair: but it is proving an embarrassment to the French Socialist leader, Lionel Jospin. Mr Jospin, 59, has been suffering unhelpful, and often unfair, comparisons with Mr Blair for months. They have become thick and fast since the snap French parliamentary election was announced by President Jacques Chirac on Monday.

"It seems to me that the British Labour party has had its cultural revolution, but not the French Socialists," said the former centre-right prime minister, Edouard Balladur. "Mr Jospin is still talking, and thinking, in the outdated concepts of state intervention which failed in the early 1980s."

There is some truth in this. Mr Jospin, after a good performance and honourable defeat in the 1995 presidential election, has failed to give the French Socialists a new post-Mitterrand mission or gloss. But British-French comparisons are also misleading.

Mr Blair's task was to bury the image of a statist, welfareist Labour Party, controlled by unions and special interests. Mr Jospin's problem is, in a sense, the opposite.

They had already become centrist, not by design but by drift. Mr Jospin and his colleagues criticise the failings of the state-shrinking reforms undertaken attempted half-heartedly under Socialist governments in the 1980s.

Should the Socialists turn left again, as the radical wing of the party demands? Or try to claim the centre, by painting the Juppé government as skidding to the right? So far, Mr Jospin has tried to do both: presenting himself as the kinder, gentler alternative to a painful set of reforms which he does not dare wholly to repu-

diating. His answer to high unemployment is a mixture of make-work public spending programmes and mandatory cuts in working hours: a throw-back to 1970s socialist dogma which was condemned as empty rhetoric by both left and right-wing commentators when first floated six weeks ago.

But his principal difficulty is with the European single currency. Mr Jospin is in favour of monetary union. How could he not be? Two of his Godfathers — François Mitterrand and Jacques Delors — are the most notable French Socialist figures of the last 50 years. But, under pressure from his own left, and from his potential Communist allies, Mr Jospin has moved in the first days of the campaign into a politically, and logically, tenuous position.

He says he is in favour of EMU, but not if it means further, agonising cuts in French public spending. One of the party's chief economic spokesmen, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, has called into question the need to meet the Maastricht guideline of a budget deficit of no more than 3 per cent of gross national product this year. This figure was based on an "unfounded dogma", he said, and could be renegotiated if necessary.

Although strictly speaking true, Mr Strauss-Kahn's comments betray an ignorance — or disregard — of the political and market realities. At this stage, any such attempt to tamper with the rules of the EMU game would bring the whole project crashing down. In Britain, to support EMU is to be accused of unpatriotic betrayal. In France, EMU remains broadly popular. To seem to jeopardise the single currency is to court accusations of betraying the longer-term economic future of the country.

Having little coherent to defend, Mr Jospin and his colleagues have decided to attack. They plan to make the election the man who engineered it — the Prime Minister, Mr Juppé, still one of the most disliked politicians in France. They accuse Mr Juppé of wanting to lead France down the Thatcher-Reagan road to heartless economic liberalism.

More riskily, they have begun to make an electoral issue of sleaze — specifically the many and tangled financial scandals bubbling away within the governing centre-right parties.

The problem with this approach is that similar, financial scandals involving Socialist and allied politicians in the Mitterrand years are still fresh in the minds of the public.

Although aggression can buy them a few days, it is clear that the early election has caught the Socialists, the main opposition party, in logistical and ideological confusion.

This was precisely what Mr Juppé had intended when he persuaded President Chirac to call the election nine months early. Being able to compare Mr Jospin to the ideologically-speaking, well-behaved boy next door is a useful bonus.

## Le Pen leaves door open to election role

John Lichfield

There was a notable absentee from the impressively long list of National Front candidates for the French election presented by Jean-Marie Le Pen yesterday. The absentee was Le Cheif, or Le Bête (the beast) as he likes to call himself, Jean-Marie Le Pen himself.

The leader of the far-right FN said that he might still run in the snap parliamentary election called for 25 May and 1 June. He would make the announcement when "the time was right".

Le Pen boasted that, if requested to do so, the "quasi-totality" of the FN candidates would be "delighted" to stand down and surrender their constituencies for him. The "quasi-totality", please note, not the totality.

There are two reasons for Mr Le Pen's uncustomed shyness. First, he knows that the other parties will mobilise all their heaviest weaponry against him as soon as they know where he is standing.

Second, Mr Le Pen is reluctant to stand at all. His closest advisers have warned him that it would be seriously damaging if he ran and lost, while his *de facto* Number Two, the rising power in the FN, Bruno Mégret, ran and won.

Mr Mégret, as expected, will be the FN candidate in Vitrolles-Marguane, the constituency north of Marseilles which included the town where his wife, Catherine, won a pivotal mayoral election in February. This seat, nurtured by Mr Mégret for years, is the one near-certain FN gain in next month's election. Mr Mégret, it can be assumed, is the one FN candidate who would not be delighted to give up his seat to his boss.

A simultaneous Mégret victory and a Le Pen defeat in the parliamentary election would be a desperate blow to the *amour propre* of Le Bête. It would also

consolidate Mr Mégret's claim to be the future leader of the party — the man capable of making the FN respectable to wavering voters who dislike the vulgarity and intermittently overt extremism of Le Pen.

The FN leader's difficulties point to the continuing electoral and strategic weaknesses of Le Penism, despite the victory in Vitrolles and its colonisation of a large part of the French working class.

The Front is running at about 13 to 15 per cent in opinion polls: this would be a historical



Le Pen: Reluctant to stand in case he loses

high for the FN in a parliamentary election.

It would be enough to put over 100 (Mr Le Pen predicts 200) FN candidates into the second round of voting on 1 June. It would bring about scores of awkward three-way second round contests, which might prevent the centre-right parties now in government from achieving another majority.

But, unless the polls are substantially undercounting FN support, as they sometimes do, it would not give Le Pen more than a couple of seats. Le Cheif said yesterday that his target was 10 seats. Political analysts say he will be lucky to gain more than one: Mr Mégret's in Vitrolles.

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# New deal for disabled as statue shows Roosevelt in wheelchair

Mary Dejevsky  
Washington

A bitter controversy involving the longest serving president of the United States, disabled lobby groups and a windswept site on the banks of the Potomac River, appears close to resolution following the last-minute intervention of President Bill Clinton.

A week before the official opening of Washington's first memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Mr Clinton has said that, if necessary, he will legislate to have an additional statue of the former president incorporated into the rambling granite ensemble.

The extra statue is to depict FDR in the wheelchair he steadfastly avoided using for his public appearances lest it damage his chances of elected office.

Roosevelt was stricken by polio in 1921 when he was 39, and – in the delicate words of the chronology that is inscribed in steps in the memorial complex – “never again walked unaided”.

An official memorial to FDR, author of the New Deal and the president who brought the US into the Second World War, was a difficult project from the start, not least because Roosevelt himself had expressly said he did not want one. All he would agree to was a small plaque positioned in front of the National Archives.

The late president's objections, though, were by no means the only difficulty, as is evident from the 50 years the project has been in gestation. There were barely disguised funding problems, the question of a suitable site, and the distinctly mixed political assessment of the Roosevelt legacy in the decades after his death.

The years of the cold war and then of Reaganism seemed to negate much of what FDR had stood for in foreign and domestic policy; the political climate was hardly conducive to celebrating his memory.

With Bill Clinton, a Democrat, into his second term as president, and New Dealism enjoying a measure of rehabilitation, all seemed set fair for the memorial finally to be completed and opened.

Almost 40 years after the site was chosen and six years after the ground was broken, the four vast outdoor chambers, representing FDR's four terms as president, were almost ready.

The giant waterfalls were functioning; the sculptures and bas-reliefs depicting FDR, his formidable wife, Eleanor, and episodes from his life, were in position. The mud was finally yielding to tarmac paving.

At the memorial's near completion, however, it emerged that none of the



Always sitting: President Roosevelt flanked by Churchill (left) and Stalin at Yalta. Bill Clinton (below right) has ensured FDR will be shown in a wheelchair

representations of Roosevelt would show his handicap.

For those who know, the signs are there. FDR is never shown standing up. The dominant statue shows him sitting. In the dining chair he sat in to receive guests – if you look carefully, to the right and behind the statue, you can see that the chair has small castors.

But, at a time and in a place where groups representing the rights of disabled people, as of other minority groups, wield great public influence, the omission was denounced. The campaign spread

from disabled groups who said they felt slighted by the omission to others who regarded it simply as a travesty of the historical truth, the perpetuation of a lie. There were calls for a big demonstration by disabled people at the opening ceremony next week unless there was an undertaking to add a statue of wheelchair-bound FDR.

Members of the memorial commission defended the lack of such a statue by noting the lack of pictures of Roosevelt in his wheelchair or being helped to walk. They, too, cited historical accuracy in

their favour and FDR's elaborate efforts not to appear handicapped. And they talked of the “artistic integrity” of the memorial complex.

Last year, however, commission members agreed to include a replica of one of FDR's wheelchairs in the reception building. Now, by promising special legislation to be placed before Congress – a Congress that voted 90 per cent of the \$48m (£30m) cost of the memorial from public funds and is highly sensitive to public opinion – Mr Clinton has probably forced their hand.



## significant shorts

### Russia and China cut their frontier forces

President Boris Yeltsin and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, were joined by leaders of the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for the signing of a treaty cutting forces along the former Sino-Soviet border, which saw Soviet-Chinese clashes in 1969. Details of the pact were secret but Russian sources said land forces, short-range aviation and anti-aircraft defences would be limited in a 63-mile-wide strip along the border. On the home front, Mr Yeltsin appointed the rising young First Deputy Prime Minister, Boris Nemtsov, as Fuel and Energy Minister. **Heleen Womack – Moscow**

### Move to halt sex-slave trade

EU ministers gathered before their two-day conference to work out a unified front to combat trafficking of women. The conference brought together justice and interior ministers to spotlight a racket that brings thousands of women into Western Europe. Many, promised legitimate jobs, end in prostitution. **AP – The Hague**

### Woman dies in bungled ambush

A Palestinian woman was killed and five relatives wounded in a bungled ambush by off-duty Palestinian security officers. The victims' car was mistaken for a vehicle they were targeting as part of a personal vendetta. Survivors identified their assailants. **AP – Ramallah**

### Plaudits for Fujimori

Japan's Foreign Minister, Yukihiko Ikeda, arrived in Lima to congratulate President Alberto Fujimori and hear how Peru's military ended the 18-week hostage crisis. In Tokyo, the Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, said he planned to visit Peru to add his thanks. **Reuters – Lima**

### Algerian rebels butcher 42

Muslim rebels hacked to death 42 people in a village, the second massacre in Algeria in 24 hours. Victims included 17 women and three babies. **Reuters – Paris**

### Turin Shroud to go on show

The Shroud of Turin, venerated as Christ's burial cloth, which was rescued from a blazing chapel, will go on display as planned next year. It remains at a secret location as the cause of the 11 April blaze is investigated. **AP – Rome**

### Dutch police take the Mickey

Amsterdam is sending its police chief, Jelle Kuiper, to Disneyland Paris to try to improve the force's relations with the public. He will visit the park to see how staff are taught the art of customer service. **Reuters – Amsterdam**

### Japan transplant go-ahead

Japan's parliament passed a bill recognising an end of brain functions as legal death, clearing the way for organ transplants for the first time since a 1968 heart transplant sparked criminal investigations. **Reuters – Tokyo**

### Correction

In Mary Dejevsky's report on the US ratification of the chemical-weapons convention in Tuesday's *Independent*, we incorrectly reported that Iran had refused to sign the convention. Iran has in fact signed.

## US welcomes a million migrants

Mary Dejevsky  
Washington

Immigration figures released this week show that nearly 1 million foreigners were allowed to settle in the United States last year, an increase of nearly 30 per cent on the previous year. The figures, which end a run of four years in which legal immigration has declined, have added to a growing debate in which two national currents of thought collide: the one stressing the benefits, the other the costs, of new residents.

The Immigration and Naturalisation Agency – which processes applications but does not set policy – cites a number of special circumstances for last year's increase in legal immigration. A spokesman said that it reflected in part the number of permits that were carried over into 1996 after not being used in 1995.

A larger factor, he said, was the knock-on effect of a 1986 amnesty of illegal immigrants; the new citizens are entitled to now bring in their families. There is no ceiling on these numbers, the agency stresses; the US Congress sets the qual-

ifications and those who meet them are allowed in.

The Cato Institute, which is well-disposed to immigration, agreed the figures represented a temporary blip and that immigration was set to continue its decline. “Immigrants are not just mouths to feed. They are productive hands and fertile minds,” a spokesman said.

But the head of a group hostile to immigration, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, claimed the figures showed the whole system was out of control.

“What we need is an immigration ‘time-out,’” said Dan Stein. Lamar Smith, chairman of the House of Representatives subcommittee on immigration, focused his argument on the nature of those being admitted, objecting that 2 million of the new immigrants over the next five years would have no secondary education and no skills.

Although this debate is still tranquil by European standards, the states and cities most affected by the increases are calling for policy to be tightened and at least one, Florida, is taking the federal government to court.

## Bomber sought ‘rivers of blood’

Tim Cornwell  
Denver

Accused Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh set out to see “rivers of blood flow in the streets of America”, jurors in his murder trial were told yesterday. He planted a massive truck bomb outside a US government building in the hope of inspiring an armed revolt.

Months before the bombing he had selected the target, prosecutor Joseph Hartzler said, outlining a powerful government case against the man accused of the worst act of terrorism on US soil. He stole detonators from a rock quarry and used Campbell's soup tins to model the barrels of home-made explosives he would use.

The former Gulf War soldier went on trial for his life yesterday in a Denver courtroom, one day after his 29th birthday. Mr McVeigh turned to terror to settle his grievances against a government he hated, Mr Hartzler said, that “with premeditated intent and a well-designed plan, he chose to take innocent lives to serve his twisted purpose.”

Three weeks before the bombing Mr McVeigh warned

his sister to stop writing him letters because the “G men”, Federal agents, might get them. Arrested on the morning of the blast driving out of Oklahoma City, he had the earplugs in his pocket that he used to protect his eardrums.

Mr Hartzler recalled the children who died in a day-care centre on the second floor of the Alfred Murrah building.

He described a mother who had just dropped off her 16-month-old child, turning to see his hands pressed against the window – the last time she would see her child alive.

The government's case is that Mr McVeigh rented a yellow Ryder truck, packed it with explosives made with fertiliser and fuel oils, drove it to Oklahoma City, and detonated it at 9.02am on 19 April 1995.

He was wearing a T-shirt with a photograph of Abraham Lincoln. Mr Hartzler said: “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants,” it said on the back.

In a pocket was a business card from a military supply company, with the handwritten note: “TNT at \$5 a stick”.

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Global strategy: Experts warn of new weapons and policies

# Power-nations look away as crises loom

Christopher Bellamy  
Defence Correspondent

A pervasive and persistent parochialism has dogged the foreign and security policies of the main players on the world stage over the past year, according to the authoritative London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

A brief post-Cold War sense of humanitarian obligation to try to solve the world's problems has begun to give way to colder *realpolitik* calculations of what can be done. In future, "coalitions of the ready and willing" will only be made up of the relevant and affected.

In its annual *Strategic Survey*, published yesterday, the Institute noted, with concern, that national elections in France, Israel, Japan, Russia, Taiwan and the US all interfered with clear foreign policy choices during 1996. In 1997, the same thing happened in Britain.

In their search for votes, or for support, leaders vying for the top position adjusted their policies to reflect what they thought their constituents wanted. Almost inevitably, this did not include foreign issues.

Institute Director John Chipman, launching this year's Sur-

vey, said that in spite of efforts to organise common foreign and security policies, western countries are reverting to a position where they will act only when they see a clear interest that can be explained domestically.

For western countries the absence of an obvious external

**“The events of 1996 showed that no state... is immune from foreign meddling”**

threat reinforces their introverted tendencies.

While US provincialism has a long tradition, the survey says, European parochialism took on a new mantle in 1996. The Institute concludes that “while the ‘under construction’ signs were up, the Europeans barely lifted their gaze above their own ramparts.”

With Europe dragging its feet the onus was, as ever, on the US to lead in world affairs.

But the US, again, saw everything through domestic lenses, delaying the admission there would be a follow-on force in Bosnia and attacking soft targets close to home like companies which tried to do business with Cuba.

Russia, too, saw things through domestic eyes — particularly the key issue of Nato enlargement which was used much as Britain's political parties used that of Europe, as a tool for domestic political confrontation.

“The events of 1996 overwhelmingly showed,” the Institute concludes, “that no state, including the US, was immune from foreign meddling in domestic affairs or domestic meddling in foreign affairs. The distinction between foreign and domestic is becoming thin and the net result is more incoherence.”

In Russia, the institute notes a decline in industrial production, a deteriorating military, and a profound criminalisation of politics and economics. Yet the institute is surprisingly optimistic. “This is not a time of troubles in the classic sense... there is no tyrant waiting in the wings, nor could one impose himself on a population that is

now half-free.”

Dr Chipman said China was an “assertive” power, rather than a directly threatening one. “China veers from excessive confidence to paranoia about its ability to prosper free of foreign constraint. The debate about how to handle China has become one of the central issues in international relations.”

The survey identifies an “arc of conflict and crisis” in Africa, illustrated as running from the Red Sea through southeast Sudan, across the whole of Rwanda and Burundi and most of Zaire, and embracing the northern part of Angola.

The survey says the international community is gradually, but significantly, disengaging from Africa.

“The test of whether the West can maintain its indifference will come if Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko is deposed and the country collapses. Should the West allow it to descend into chaos without attempting to shore up a reasonable, unifying government, there will be little hope for any other African country facing an uncertain future.”

■ *Strategic Survey 1996/97*, (Oxford University Press for the IIS, London, 1997), £25/\$39.

## Deadly threat of micro-organisms

Christopher Bellamy

The key emerging military threats identified in the latest survey from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IIS) are biological weapons and the spread of cruise missiles.

After decades of neglecting the threat from “regional aggressors” — Third-World powers — armed with biological weapons, three events have reinforced international concern. These are the discovery of Iraq's arsenal after the 1991 Gulf war; evidence that Russia continues to develop deadly viruses and bacteria; and the

threat that terrorists like the Aum Shinri Kyo cult in Japan, which used nerve gas in the Tokyo underground, might turn to these horrific bugs, which can be grown as easily as brewing home-made beer.

“Preventing determined proliferators acquiring biological

and toxin agents appears to be virtually impossible,” the IIS concludes. Whereas large-scale attacks are unlikely in the near future, it says, “these barriers are crumbling and the revolutionary advances in biotechnology will probably remove them altogether in the first decade of the 21st century.”

Biological weapons use micro-

organisms — either bacteria or viruses — or toxins which, although biological in origin, behave more like deadly chemicals. Weight for weight, biological warfare agents can be hundreds or thousands of times more potent than chemicals, and can cause a variety of symptoms.

Aum Shinri Kyo experimented with anthrax, which causes breathing difficulties, exhaustion, toxemia and cyanosis and kills in 95 to 100 per cent of cases but, fortunately, their experiments affected no one. Anthrax is probably the deadliest biological agent; others which have been developed are tularaemia

(deadly in 30 to 40 per cent of cases), botulism and bubonic plague.

Despite continuing inspections by the United Nations, it suspects that Iraq continues to retain biological weapons. The IIS report says inspectors found Iraq had developed biological rocket warheads.

Although the design was crude — each rocket carried about eight litres of liquid anthrax spores or botulinum — one rocket could contaminate several square kilometres. Iraq also developed biological shells for 155mm artillery shells and aircraft bombs, and had come close to developing spray tanks.



A young Rwandan refugee watches over his mother, who has cholera, in Kisangani

Photograph: Reuters

## Rebels close on Kinshasa

Mary Braid  
Johannesburg

The siege of Kinshasa drew closer yesterday after rebels announced the capture of three gateway towns to the Zairean capital, choking food and essential supplies. Mwenge Kongolo, the rebel “justice minister,” revised the recent forecast by his leader, Laurent Kabila, of the fall of Kinshasa from weeks to “a matter of days.”

The rebels seized Ilebo, Tshikapa and Doweto. A pincer offensive appears to be under way after missionaries in Bas-Zaïre province reported the arrival of the first rebel force west of Kinshasa. Families of government soldiers in the port of Matadi are being sent back to Kinshasa and diplomats in the capital confirm military activity on the border between Bas-Zaïre and Angola.

Analysts had forecast that Angola could provide a strategic springboard for the rebels. President Sese Seko Mobutu is an old enemy of the Angolan President, Jose Eduardo dos Santos. “The rebel plan is becoming clearer now,” said an analyst in Kinshasa. “They want to force the capital into submission and the noose is tightening.”

Most people in Kinshasa will welcome the speed of the rebel

advance but there are concerns that Mr Mobutu, the country's corrupt ruler for the past three decades, may take violent revenge before his almost inevitable flight. If he spares his people, and opposition politicians, his desperate, thuggish soldiers, who have looted and raped civilians during six months of retreat, may not.

The official line is that troops will defend Kinshasa to the last man. But yesterday Mr Kongolo said he did not believe there would be a bloody battle for the capital. In Geneva, Francois Lumumba, son of Patrice Lumumba, the country's first prime minister, and Mr Kabila's hero, appealed to Mr Mobutu not to launch any revenge attacks on the population.

“To the numerous crimes (he has) already committed it is useless to add, on the eve of the new regime, a crime against humanity,” said Mr Lumumba, an opposition figure in Kinshasa who was on his way to eastern Zaire for talks with Mr Kabila. Mr Mobutu was implicated in the death of Patrice Lumumba.

The people of Kinshasa may have to rely on Mr Mobutu's restraint, because South African-led peace talks are going nowhere. Although South African ministers said yesterday that the UN special envoy, Mo-

hamed Sahnoun, was poised to return to Cape Town to settle a date and venue for direct talks and that both sides had reaffirmed their commitment to a negotiated peace, analysts believe Mr Kabila will not stop until Mr Mobutu and his regime are ousted.

The US has warned that Mr Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire could be damaging relations with the West by failing to repatriate Rwandan Hutu refugees in east Zaire. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, had claimed the rebels

were starving refugees by blocking aid agencies access to them. The refugees fled to Zaire two years ago after the Hutu genocide of 800,000 Tutsis.

The rebels deny being destructive. Yesterday they allowed the UN to visit camps where rebel massacres of refugees and deaths from starvation had been reported. Last night a UN spokesman said a team had found two camps, which until this week housed 55,000 refugees, deserted at Kasese, south of Kisangani. The rebels, he said, would not allow the team to travel further.

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# Anzacs declare war on the Dirty Digger

Robert Milliken  
Sydney

As Australians mark Anzac Day, Rupert Murdoch is under fire for his commercial exploitation of one of the most sacred days in the Australian calendar, when the country commemorates its war dead.

Veterans and their families have accused Mr Murdoch of "corporate vandalism" over his use of military symbols to promote an Anzac Test between Australian and New Zealand rugby league teams in Sydney today. The game will be staged by Superleague, the rugby league enterprise that Mr Murdoch has created for his Australian pay-television venture.

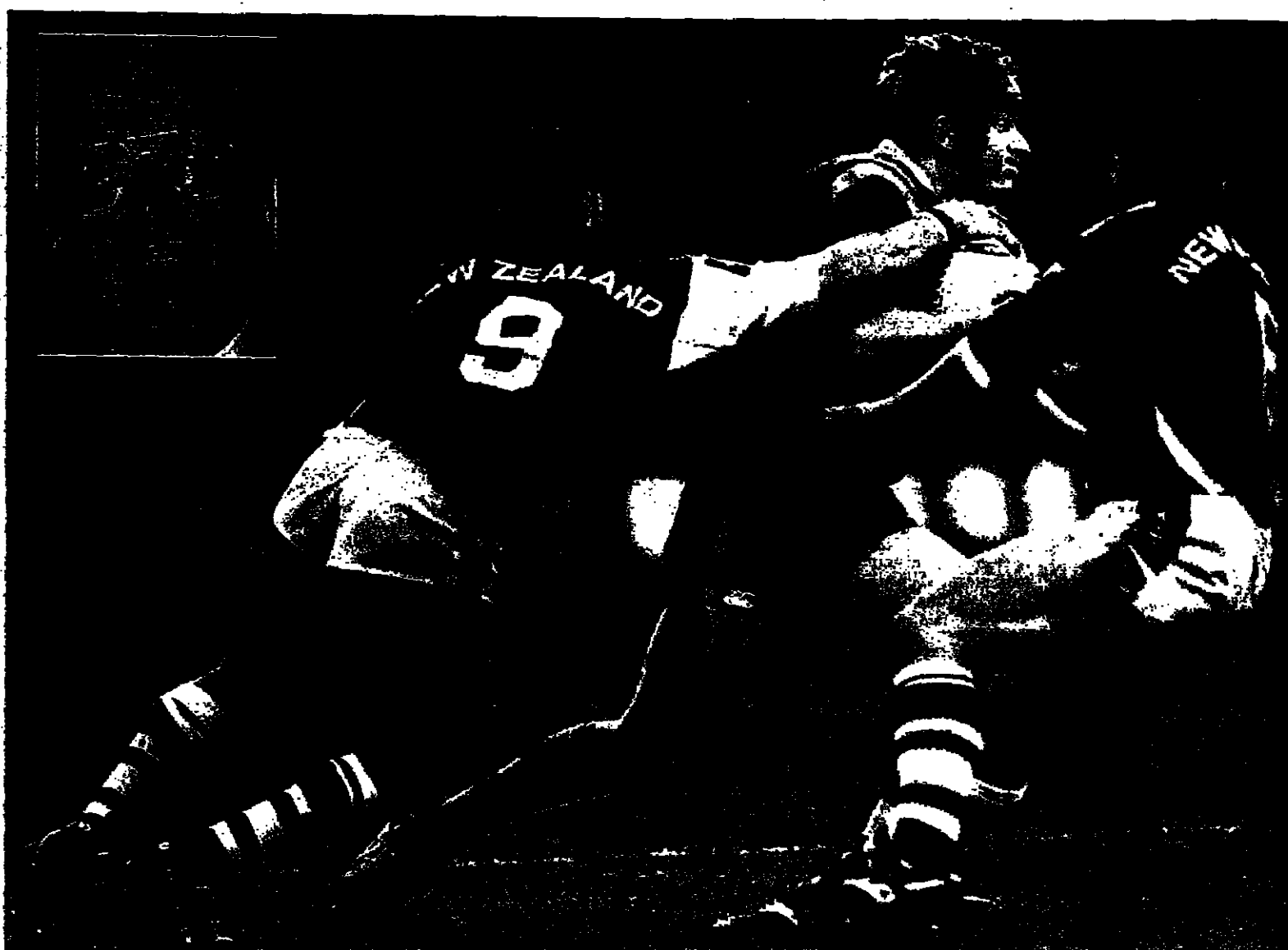
Anzac Day is a public holiday in which Australians and New Zealanders mark the anniversary of the disastrous Gallipoli landings of the First World War on 25 April 1915, and remember their dead in other wars. As the numbers of returned soldiers, or "Diggers", have dwindled over the years, Anzac Day marches and ceremonies have swelled as their descendants have stepped into their shoes.

For 81 years, since the first Anzac Day in 1916, solemnity and commercial-free have been

the watchwords. Enter Mr Murdoch, sometimes known as the "Dirty Digger" over his tabloid newspapers. Superleague recently struck a deal with the New South Wales branch of the Returned Services League (RSL), the veterans' organisation. In return for using the word "Anzac" in connection with the Australia-New Zealand match today, using the Army's rising-sun symbol on players' uniforms and offering a trophy in the shape of the Australian army slouch hat, Superleague would donate A\$20,000 (£10,000) towards a walkway that the RSL is building to commemorate soldiers who died in New Guinea in the Second World War.

When the deal was revealed, John Rbot, chief executive of Superleague, deflected the resulting flak by denying that the Murdoch organisation had bought the Anzac legend for commercial gain. "We're enhancing it," he said. "We're creating a young audience."

But many old soldiers are outraged. Alf Garland, a retired brigadier and former RSL president, attacked the Test's television promotion, which compares football teams to soldiers in battle. "I don't think these people should be using



Patriot games: The use of the Anzac name by Murdoch (inset) to promote the Rugby League test clash between Australian and New Zealand today has for many cheapened the memory of those who fought and died at Gallipoli, below right. Main photograph: David Ashdown

Anzac as a commercial proposition," he said. "I'll be going to the dawn service and remembering the people I served with who never came back. That's what it should be."

While the Anzacs were attacking him, Mr Murdoch was being challenged on a second front by opponents of his plan to turn another Australian public icon, the Sydney Showgrounds, into a studio and film theme park for Twentieth Century Fox, the Hollywood studio he owns. Opponents of the deal yesterday took it to court in Sydney. They are led by Sinclair Hill, a prominent, wealthy

Australian farmer and a friend of the Prince of Wales, whom he once taught polo. Mr Hill last week paid almost A\$40,000 for a full-page advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald, a non-Murdoch paper, in the form of an open letter to the magazine.

"The 71 acres of the showgrounds are a national treasure," Mr Hill wrote. "Every Australian hates your Fox destruction of our heritage and history. Destruction of our soul."

Mr Hill then appealed to Mr Murdoch to build his studio elsewhere. "There is no greater

Australian than you, Rupert, and I again ask you to make one of the truly great decisions of your life, a Murdoch contribution to Australia. PULL THE PIN."

Mr Hill's open letter followed a direct plea to Mr Murdoch in a 15-minute telephone conversation between the two men several weeks earlier.

As he prepared to go to the New South Wales Court of Appeal yesterday, Mr Hill said: "I was born with a silver spoon, and part of my responsibility is to help the whole cultural betterment of the country. This showground land is part of the entanglement of people and history. I want Murdoch to leave it behind as a public park that we could build into the spirit of an Australian republic, which he supports."

"I'm a republican too. I hope Prince Charles comes out here and helps us become a republic. He's a big man, a fine human being. I will suggest to Prince Charles that he come here and help us become a republic."

The showgrounds, public land since 1811, were offered to Mr Murdoch by Australia's former Labor government in a deal that it hoped would secure support from the Murdoch press at



last year's general election. After Mr Murdoch secured the right to build the studio, his papers then failed to support Labor and its leader, Paul Keating, who lost in a landslide.

And what was Mr Murdoch's response to Mr Hill's phone call? "He said 'I will think about it,'" said Mr Hill.

In what looks like a conciliatory gesture ahead of the talks, Greece has postponed military flights in Greek Cypriot airspace and has put off a joint exercise with the Greek Cypriot national guard. But the small initiatives towards Turkey have proved too much for recalcitrants in Greece's ruling Pasok party. Thirty-two members of parliament are opposed to almost any form of talks with Turkey and similar intransigence is felt in Turkey, too.

## Greco-Turkish relations show a thaw

Tony Barber  
Europe Editor

To the untrained eye, the steps Greece and Turkey are taking towards improving ties are so small as to be almost imperceptible. Yet the Greek-Turkish relationship has been paralysed by hostility and mistrust for so long that any movement seems a change for the better.

Greek Deputy Foreign Minister, Georgios Papandreou, and his Turkish counterpart, Onur Oymen, agreed at a meeting in Malta last week to set up a committee of independent experts from both countries to discuss how to improve relations.

Despite stressing that the experts would not represent their governments and that no one should expect "immediate and sweeping results", Mr Papandreou pronounced himself satisfied that this was the right way forward for the two countries.

But the process is likely to be slow because Greece does not anticipate any face-to-face meetings between the experts. Instead they intend to communicate indirectly, through the European Union's Dutch presidency. Moreover, Greece has been at pains to underline that the experts' talks will not even constitute a "dialogue", a word which in diplomatic parlance implies something friendly and official. Rather, they will focus on "procedural issues relating to Greek-Turkish disputes".

Of these there are plenty, ranging from the Cyprus conflict to arguments over territorial waters, islands, airspace and mineral rights in the Aegean Sea.

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**THE World of Lily Wong** by LARRY FEIN © 1997

25 April 1997

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The illusion of a figure that had defied time: design by Louis for gown for Marlene Dietrich, using flesh-coloured chiffon

Jean Louis was one of the finest costume designers of Hollywood's golden years. His clothes for women were soft and pliable, glamorous and very feminine, though like all designers of the period he was also adept at providing wide shoulders, angular lines, or smartly tailored business suits for the executive woman. He spent most of his early career as Head of Costume at Columbia Studios, where he dressed stars such as Rosalind Russell ("The way she carried her clothes made it a pleasure"), Lucille Ball, Ginger Rogers, Kim Novak and the studio's prime contract star, Rita Hayworth.

For Hayworth he designed one of the most famous gowns in Hollywood history, the black satin strapless evening dress in which she moved with alluring abandon across a night-club floor performing "Put the Blame on Mame" as she seductively peeled off long matching gloves and tossed her hair provocatively in the classic film noir *Gilda* (1946).

The recipient of 14 Oscar nominations, Louis later designed clothes for the Doris Day-Rock Hudson comedies at Universal, and for Judy Garland in *A Star is Born* (1953). It was Louis who conceived the flesh-coloured body stocking and beaded gown that were to become so important a part of Marlene Dietrich's stage act, and it was a simple black silk jacquard dress by Louis that Nancy Reagan was wearing on the night her husband was first elected president.

Born Jean Louis Berthault in 1907, in Paris, Louis attended the Arts Décoratifs school there and, on graduation, was employed by the couture house of Dreyfus as a sketch artist. When he broke his arm in a taxi accident, the settlement money he was awarded enabled him to travel to New York, where he obtained a job at Hattie Carnegie's fashion house. One of his first designs, a blue satin evening gown, was purchased by Irene Dunne, who remained his customer for the rest of her life.

Another of the Carnegie customers was Joan Cohn, the wife of the Columbia chief Harry Cohn, and she recommended Louis to her husband, who signed him to a contract in 1944.

His first assignment, *Together Again* (1944), starred his friend Irene Dunne, who stated, "I never had a designer who understood the importance of the close-up as much as Jean. He always made necklines that were different and interesting without drawing undue attention." The musical *Tonight and Every Night* (1945) started Louis' long association with the studio's "love goddess" Rita Hayworth. "Rita had a good body," said Louis. "It wasn't difficult to dress her. She was very thin-limbed, the legs were thin, the arms long and thin and she had beautiful hands. But the body was thick. She also had a belly there, but we could hide that."

One of the methods Louis used was to emphasise her waist and shoulders, and the famous *Gilda* gown did just that. "It was the most famous dress I ever made," said Louis. "Every body wonders how that dress can stay on her while she sings and dances... well, inside there was a harness like you put on a horse. We put grosgrain under the bust with darts and three stays, one in the centre, two on the sides. Then we moulded plastic softener over a gas flame and shaped around the top of the dress. No matter how she moved, the dress did not fall down."

For Hayworth's dance of the seven veils in *Sahara* (1953), Louis had the problem of conveying the impression of youthful flesh beneath the semi-transparent veils without the use of brassieres or lifts, the straps of which would have shown. His solution was to create a plastic body stocking which gave the illusion of nudity while retaining the perceived Hayworth shape.

Later, when Marlene Dietrich came to Jean Louis as a private client, he created a similar garment for her, along with form-hugging beaded gowns in flesh-coloured chiffon, to give the illusion of a figure that had defied time. Dietrich came to rely on Louis' expertise so much that when Harry Cohn tried to prevent her using Louis (he was displeased that Dietrich had turned down his offer to star her in *Pal Joey* - at that time to costar Jack Lemmon in the role eventually played by Sinatra), she told the bosses of the Las Vegas casino where she was due to appear, who in turn contacted

their Chicago associates, who were able to persuade Cohn to change his mind.

When Judy Holliday joined Columbia to star in *Born Yesterday* (1950), Louis found her one of his greatest challenges, since she was not a natural glamour girl, and tended to put on weight. As Billie Dawn, the mistress of a crooked politician, she was given 13 costumes by Louis which chartered her character's evolution from vulgar to refined as she discovered education and true romance. "She came in to be dressed for the test and she was completely disinterested," said Louis. "We did the best we could but it didn't look glamorous. But as soon as the camera started, that woman became all glamour. That is a great actress." He worked on most of Holliday's subsequent films, and won an Academy Award for *The Solid Gold Cadillac* (1956).

When Judy Garland became unhappy with the costumes designed for her by young Mary Ann Nyberg for *A Star is Born* (she literally ripped one off in anger), she asked for Louis, who designed at least three memorable outfits for the movie - the navy blue bolero and skirt in which Garland sings "Gotta Have Me Go With You", the black and white dress in which she accepts the Academy Award, and the gold brocade and fox fur for the finale when she announces, "This is Mrs Norman Maine".

When Harry Cohn decided it was time to find a replacement for Hayworth, he asked his make-up and costume departments to prepare stardust Kim Novak for tests. Louis designed a wardrobe for her, accentuating what he considered her most appealing feature, her bust, but the young actress refused his request that she wear a padded brassiere. When Cohn saw the tests he screamed, "She has no bust!", to which Louis replied, "That is her bust!" Receiving an ultimatum from the studio chief, Novak ultimately agreed to wear a brassiere, and Louis costumed her in several subsequent films including *Pal Joey* (1957), co-starring Hayworth. Louis had problems of a different kind when Betty Grable made *Three for the Show* (1953) at Columbia. She insisted that Louis al-



Fourteen Oscar nominations: Louis at work for Dietrich

low her breasts to be raised to what he considered a ridiculous height to accentuate what she regarded as a tiny waist. "If you put your bust here," protested Louis, "you will have no neck."

In 1958, with studios cutting down on creative personnel, more films were being costume with ready-made clothes, "choppers" replacing designers - Louis moved from Columbia to Universal, where the producer Ross Hunter was starting his string of lush, glossy comedies and melodramas. One of Hunter's methods of attracting stars such as Doris Day, Susan Hayward and Lana Turner was to promise them gorgeous clothes designed by Louis. In *Pillow Talk* (1959) he created a new sophisticated allure for Doris Day that launched a new phase of her career, and in *Imitation of Life* (1958) Lana Turner was given the sort of glamorous wardrobe that was becoming rare on an increasingly "realistic" screen. (When Turner was cast in Otto Preminger's *Anatomy of a Murder* the following year, it was her insistence on having Louis design her a set

of beautiful gowns for her role as a soldier's wife that caused her to be fired from the film and replaced by Lee Remick.)

Louis worked with Turner again on *Portrait in Black* (1960) and *Madame X* (1965). Constance Bennett, cast as Turner's mother-in-law in the latter, refused to be aged with make-up and, in Louis's soft sweaters and chiffon scarves, looked exactly the same age as Turner. More problems arose for Louis when, for a scene in which the two women were both to wear fur coats, with Turner in a Louis-designed white mink, Bennett insisted on wearing sable. When Turner heard, she demanded that she be given sable, adding, "Let Constance wear chinchilla. It's more suitable for an older person."

Louis designed a more modest wardrobe for Marilyn Monroe as a troubled divorcee in *The Misfits* (1961). He recounted that, "One day Marilyn came down her stairs in a dressing gown and stopped in front of me. She said, 'Jean, if you're going to make clothes for me you should see what I look like.' She

pulled open her dressing gown and there she was - wearing absolutely nothing." This inspired Louis to design her a minute polka-dot bikini. He also designed the heavily beaded gown in which Monroe sang "Happy Birthday" to President John F. Kennedy in Washington.

He designed more formal wear for Katharine Hepburn in both *Suddenly Last Summer* (1960) and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), and had fun with the low-waisted dresses and cloche hats of the Twenties for Julie Andrews in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1966).

Generally, Louis had excellent relations with the stars he dressed. A small, reserved and soft-spoken man, he was used by many stars to design items for their personal wardrobes, or their stage and television appearances. When Loretta Young in 1953 became the first major film star to make the transition to a weekly television series, she chose Louis to design her gowns. Each week of the anthology series Young would literally whirl through a doorway to introduce the show wearing a glamorous Louis creation.

When Dorothy Lamour headlined at the London Palladium in 1950, Jean Louis designed the costumes for her act including, for her final number, a white strapless gown with a form-fitting bodice and over 200 yards of fine tulle for the skirt. At the climax of her act, Lamour would slip the gown off to reveal underneath her trademark sarong.

Louis' last film was Ross Hunter's best-forgotten musical remake of *Lost Horizon* (1972). He had founded Jean Louis Inc, designing ready-to-wear clothes for the public, several years before, but with changing tastes business faltered. At his Valhalla beach home, he and his late wife Maggy Fisher had been noted for their elegantly lavish parties, which had further depleted his funds. In 1993, he married the star for whom he had designed costumes 40 years earlier, Loretta Young.

Tom Vallance

Jean Louis Berthault (Jean Louis), costume designer: born Paris 5 October 1907; married first Maggy Fisher (deceased), 1993 Loretta Young; died Palm Springs, California 20 April 1997.

## Reg Gammon

Reg Gammon was born in the year Gauguin began painting the belles and natural beauty of an unspoilt Tahiti: 103 years ago.

References to his longevity amused but never annoyed Gammon. He rather enjoyed the fact that celebrity as an outstanding romantic painter, beyond his large circle of friends and admirers in the West of England, came only in his 92nd year, when he held his first London one-man show.

Reg Gammon was an excellent and successful illustrator who, thanks to the lucky chance of foul weather on a sketching holiday in Ireland when he was well into his sixties, turned to oil paint in desperation after his watercolours were repeatedly washed away by the rain. The moment was one of rapture. All his carefully nurtured illustrative skills were abandoned in the discovery of the fiery joys of oils.

He was born the son of a local builder in the village of Petersfield, Hampshire, in January 1894. He would have joined his father in the business but for a serious foot injury during his schooldays at Churcher's Col-

lege, Petersfield. Instead, in 1911 he became apprenticed to a black-and-white illustrator, Frank Patterson, whose studio was at Billingshurst, Sussex. Patterson's penwork was particularly skilful and Reg learnt his craft by watching his master at work and by copying cartoons from Victorian copies of *Punch*.

He twice enlisted during the First World War. He was first discharged on medical grounds but re-enlisted and served out the last two years of the war with the Army Service Corps. He married his wife Betty - she died in 1982 - and they settled down at Farnhurst, in Sussex after his discharge.

Gammon's talent was spotted by the art establishment and he was offered a place at the Slade but declined. He said: "I'd been in a rut if I'd gone to art school. The teaching wouldn't have suited me." Art school in central London would have been purgatory for such an outdoors-loving young man.

Instead he chose the precarious life of a freelance illustrator and writer, specialising in country topics. Private transport

was becoming increasingly popular in the 1920s and Gammon found regular work with the Temple Press on titles including *The Motor*, the *Light Car* and *Motor Cycling*. In 1924 he wrote and illustrated his first country feature for the *Cycling Touring Club Gazette*, a column he continued for 60 years. He placed cartoons in *Punch*. He was a keen Scout and his "In the Open Air" column for the *Scout* made such an impression that, when a new editor rashly tried to drop it, Scouts across the world protested so vociferously that the decision was rescinded.

His break into Fleet Street came in 1930 with a retainer from the *News Chronicle*. He would take his motorcycle to the Ascot races, draw the scene and have back to the office with a completed sketch for the next day's paper. He covered the Monte Carlo rally and he sketched motor-racing heroes like Henry Seagrave and Malcolm Campbell at Brooklands.

But his heart lay in the countryside and he found a mass audience of newspaper and magazine readers for the rural

Britain he depicted so lovingly week after week. Whether sketching the crags of Bowfell in the Lake District or a pretty village street in Sussex, Reg Gammon offered readers a dreamy world where a refreshing cup of tea and a scone always seemed to be just around the corner at the end of a day's cycling, motoring or rambling.

The Second World War changed all that. Newspaper rationing killed off the magazines and newspaper pages on which he had relied for his income. The family packed their bags and moved to the Black Mountains in South Wales, where Reg set himself up as a hill farmer in the Llanthony valley near Llangenny. There he introduced new production and in colour for a wholly Expressionist view. Donkeys were blue. Calves became bright green. Red was ever-present... it was his favourite colour and, he said shyly, helped sell his paintings.

Reg Gammon's close association with the Royal West of England Academy was formalised by his election as a full member in 1966. From then on his work was an annual highlight

of the autumn shows at the academy's beautiful galleries in Clifton, Bristol. He became an institution at RWA previews, a sprite-like figure with twinkling eyes and a generous smile, a healthy distrust of popularity, but his reputation grew and in 1986, the year after an outstanding retrospective at the RWA, came his first London one-man show, at the New Grafton Gallery. The reviews were excellent and four one-man exhibitions at the New Grafton followed, before a 100th birthday retrospective at the RWA.

After such a long, happy and fulfilled life - the prolific flow and high standard of his work continued until the end - Reg Gammon died with a single regret. He had longed to see in the 21st century.

James Belsey

Reginald William Gammon, artist and illustrator: born Petersfield, Hampshire 9 January 1894; RWA 1966; married 1917 Betty Knight (died 1982; two sons); died Bridgwater, Somerset 22 April 1997.



Fulfilled: Gammon had his first London one-man show aged 92

**Announcements for Gazette**  
BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1, Cannon Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-239 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-239 2012) or faxed to 0171-239 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER: Gazette announcements (notices, funerals, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). Please include a daytime telephone number.

### Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 7.59pm.  
United Synagogue: 0181-243 8989.  
Federation of Synagogues: 0181-202 2263.  
Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-589 1663.  
Reform Synagogue of Great Britain: 0171-249 3731.  
Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-289 2573.  
New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-325 1026.

### ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, Colonel-in-Chief, attended the Annual Dinner of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London, 24th April. The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, with the Duke of Gloucester, visited the Royal Society, London, 24th April. The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, with the Duke of Gloucester, visited the Royal Society, London, 24th April. The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh, with the Duke of Gloucester, visited the Royal Society, London, 24th April.

### Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, the Queen's Life Guard, will change the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, tomorrow (provided by the Royal Household).

### Birthdays

Professor Bob Boucher, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, UMIST, 57; Mr Eric Britton, darts champion, 40; Sir Robin Carter, former chairman, Disasters Company, 78; Mr Anthony Christopher, former trade union leader, 72; Mr Jonathan Croy, football manager, 50; Mr David de Perer, former director-general, Cancer Research Campaign, 63; Dr Thomas Faber, chairman, Geoffrey Faber, 70; Lord Gladwyn, author and former diplomat, 97; Sir Francis Graham-Smith, former Astronomer Royal, 74; Lord Hayter, a Deputy Chairman, House of Lords, 86; Mr Alan Hoole, Governor of Anguilla, 55; Sir Paul Judge, former director-general, Conservative Party, 48; The Earl of Lichfield, photographer, 58; Sir Michael Jewell, Smith, ambassador to Greece, 58; Mr David Machin, Under Treasurer, Gray's Inn, 63; Lady Marne, former chairman, BBC and IBA Central Appeals Advisory Committee, 77; Surgeon Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Milton-Thompson, 67; Mr Buster Mottram, tennis player, 42; Miss Marian Norrie, circuit judge, 57; Mr John Owen, governor of the Cayman Islands, 56; Mr Al Pacino, actor, 57; Miss Helen Pelling, circuit judge, 64; Mr William Roache, actor, 65; Mr David Shepherd, artist, 66; Lord Skidelsky, Professor of Political Economy, Warwick University, 58; Mrs Veronica Sutherland, ambassador to the Republic of Ireland, 58; Mr Björn Ulvén, singer, 52.

### Anniversaries

Births: Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, 1599; Sir Mark Isambard Brunel, engineer and inventor, 1769; John Noble, priest and founder-member of the Oxford

Movement, 1792; Charles Burgess Fry, cricketer and writer, 1872; Walter de la Mare, poet and novelist, 1873; Guglielmo Marconi, radio pioneer, 1874; Edward (Egbert) Roscoe, meteorologist and broadcaster, 1908; Elsie Fingard, singer, 1917; Desma Marguerite de Angou, Queen, wife of Henry VI, 1482; Anders Celsius, inventor of the centigrade thermometer, 1744; Kawabata Yasunari, painter, 1889; Sir Carol Reed, film director, 1908; Dame Celia Johnson, actress, 1908; Ginger Rogers (Virginia Katherine McMath), actress and dancer, 1905. On this day: the Dutch defeated the Spanish in the Bay of Gibraltar, 1607; the guillotine was first erected in Paris, 1792; construction of the Suez Canal began, 1859; the Confederate forces surrendered to Admiral Farragut at the Battle of New Orleans, 1862; British, French, Australian and New Zealand forces landed at the Gallipoli peninsula, Turkey, 1915; Puccini's opera *Turandot* was first performed, Milan, 1926; in North America, the St Lawrence Seaway, 89 miles long, was opened, 1959; the BBC radio serial *The Dales* ended after 21 years and over 5,400 episodes, 1969; in Portugal, a military junta deposed the government, president and prime minister, 1974; in Stockholm, the West German embassy was blown up by terrorists and two people shot, 1975; Portugal held its first free elections for 50 years, 1975. Today is Anzac Day and the Feast Day of St Anisimos of Alexandria, St Hensbald and St Mark the Evangelist.

### Lectures

National Gallery: Tom Henry, "The Italian Baroque (iv), Guercino as a Narrative Painter", 1pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Gill Saunders, "Public and Private: women's lives in 19th-century art", 2.30pm.

Tate Gallery: Timothy Hyman and Paul Gopal-Chowdhury, "Louis Comolli", 1pm.  
Architectural Association (with Camden Arts Centre), London WC1: Christine Iles, Michael Newman and Judith Goddard, "Repetition", 5pm.

### Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Sir Nicholas Bonsor Bt, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, hosted a farewell luncheon yesterday at Lancaster House, London SW1, in honour of Sr Aquilino Boyd de la Guardia, Ambassador of the Republic of Panama.

### Dinners

Saints and Sinners Club: The Annual Dinner of the Saints and Sinners Club was held yesterday evening at the Savoy Hotel, London W1. Professor David Purdie, The Right Rev Lord Rensley, Mr John Mathew QC and Mr Gay Kenderley, Chairman of the Club, were the speakers. Mr Kenderley installed Mr Jimmy Tarbuck as his successor.

### Edna Lumb

Artistic Trust: Mr Derek Hyatt presented the Edna Lumb Travel Prize to Miss Louise Jefferson and Mrs Joan Simmons at a ceremony held yesterday at the Leeds Metropolitan University. The prize is awarded by the Edna Lumb Artistic Trust to Leeds art students. A reception was held afterwards.

## Bank has to disprove constructive notice

### LAW REPORT

25 April 1997

Barclays Bank plc v Boscawen, Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Leggatt, Lord Justice Mummery, Sir Brian Neill) 23 April 1997

In possession proceedings by a bank in whose favour a husband and wife had executed a legal charge on the property, the onus was not on the wife to plead expressly that the bank had constructive notice of her right against her husband to have the legal charge set aside.

The Court of Appeal allowed the appeal of the second defendant against a ruling in the county court that, unless she had expressly pleaded constructive notice, she could not argue at the trial that the plaintiff bank had constructive notice of her claim that she had been induced to sign a legal charge by misrepresentation.

The first and second defendants, who were husband and wife, executed a legal charge over their house in favour of the bank. After the husband's failure to comply with a demand from the bank for payment of sums alleged to be owed, the bank started possession proceedings. The wife served a separate defence, admitting that she had signed the legal charge but pleading that she had done so as a result of a misrepresenta-

tion by the husband. She counterclaimed for a declaration that she had a half share in the property free of the legal charge. Christopher Carey (Counsel) for the wife, Michael Sullivan (Teacher Stern Selby) for the bank.

Lord Justice Mummery said that the sole question on appeal was whether, on the pleadings as presently drawn, the wife was entitled to argue that the bank was fixed with constructive notice of her claim against her husband.

The wife's case was that she had pleaded all the relevant facts and matters which entitled her to mount that argument. She had pleaded the legal charge (which she admitted having signed); that she was the wife of the debtor; had given particulars in support of her claim that her husband had made a misrepresentation to her on which she had relied in signing the charge; had claimed that she had received no explanation of the meaning and effect of the charge before she signed it; and thus contended that she had a right in equity to have the charge set aside.

It was submitted that the legal consequences of material facts did not have to be pleaded and that, if established by evidence, the legal consequence of the facts pleaded was to fix the bank with constructive notice.

The bank relied principally on the rules of pleading, in particular RSC O 18 r 8(2) and r12(4), submitting that it was necessary to plead every ground of defence to an action for possession, including constructive notice.

In his Lordship's judgment the appeal should be allowed. Procedure and practice required that all material facts should be pleaded. In general, only facts should be pleaded; not evidence relied on to prove the facts; not points of law; not argument.

As only material facts had to be pleaded, the wife was entitled to argue at the trial, on the basis of the facts already set out in her defence and counterclaim, the issue of constructive notice. It was not necessary for her to add another paragraph expressly alleging constructive notice.

The relevant substantive law

confirmed that conclusion. On the authority of Lord Browne-Wilkinson's speech in *Barclays Bank plc v O'Brien* [1994] 1 AC 180 and on well-established equitable principles, the burden was not on the wife to plead and prove that the bank had constructive notice: it was on the bank to plead and prove that it did not.

It was well established that the doctrine of bona fide purchaser for value without actual or constructive notice was a defence which could be raised to defeat a claim of an equitable right or interest, and that the burden was on the person raising that defence to plead and prove all its elements: it was a "single defence".

The speech of Lord Browne-Wilkinson in *O'Brien* supported the view that the same approach to pleading and proof of constructive notice applied in *O'Brien* cases as in the standard case.

It was irrelevant in such cases whether the land was registered or unregistered; the question was whether the creditor had actual or constructive notice of the facts on which the equity to set aside the transaction was founded.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

الاحول



# The swan, the ducklings and the Three Pilchards

We are beginning to crack. We cannot face writing another leading article today about the unanswered questions of this election. So let us turn to a subject of real, undisputed importance. Are you pro-swan or pro-duck?

This is a question much larger than the Cornish village of Polperro, where it has split the residents. The whole nation should take sides. Pollsters with their clipboards should drop their tedious questions about the European Union and find out what people think about dead ducklings.

Freddie the swan has been behaving as nature intended: that is, red in bill and webbed foot. The swan, which has lived in the village harbour for 10 years, has been slaughtering ducklings, which it sees as threatening the food supply of its own offspring. This is a grisly sight, apparently, turning the sleepy port into a maelstrom of carnage and destruction, and upsetting tourists and local children.

This drama in the animal kingdom raises large questions. Charles Darwin would have wrestled with the implications for human morality. The swan is not, of course, obeying the dictates of Nature, but of his genes, programmed to ensure their survival and therefore the continuation of the species. Hence his genocidal (or should we say speciocidal?) instincts. As tourists and residents ponder the fluffy remains of

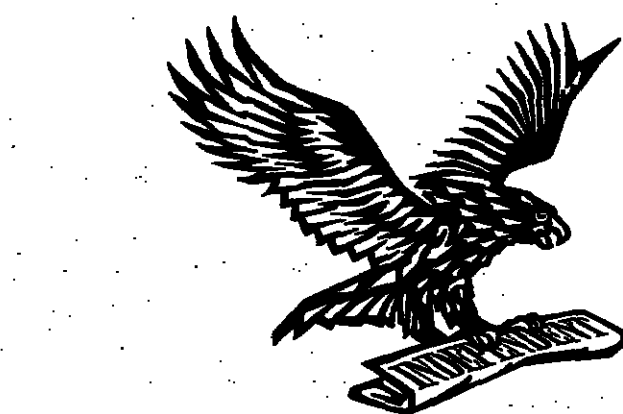
local mallard offspring floating in the water, they have to ask themselves if humans are anything more than vehicles for their own selfish genes.

Sadly, the residents of Polperro do not seem to have paused to consider these matters. Instead they have rushed to judgement, lining up with the pro-duck faction or the pro-swan faction, and some of them have behaved rather badly.

So now there are two ethical dilemmas to consider: the rights and wrongs of birds, and the rights and wrongs of human responses to the birds.

On the first, the RSPCA has taken a hard line. There is no natural food source in Polperro for swans or ducks, so both species must rely on the bread thrown to them by people, or rubbish and sewage they can scavenge. Human generosity is such that there has been an explosion in the duck population, says the RSPCA, and Freddie is bound to defend the food for his own offspring. The RSPCA's line is to let nature – or genetics – take its course, and to condemn roundly those residents who tried to get rid of the swan by spraying it with washing-up liquid.

On the narrow point, the RSPCA is absolutely right, and there can be no excuse for trying to kill Freddie by poisoning him. On the broader issue, however, Freddie (and the ducks) only survive in Polperro as a kind of outdoor pet, entirely dependent on human



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beings. So if the human beings want to move him or curtail his murderous activities, they have a moral right to do so, provided they avoid cruelty.

The trouble is that Freddie and his mate, Phreda, are homing swans, and would probably return if someone tried to relocate them. So there are only three options. Someone has got to shoot these swans (we appeal for more information about the presence or absence of cypriots); or Polperro gets used to dead ducklings among the jetsam and jetsam; or people have got to stop feeding the blessed things, and then all the birds will go and live happily elsewhere.

This solution would seem too logical for the residents of Polperro, who have resorted to the kind of unmentionable tactics and petty hatreds that lie beneath the surface of any pretty village. Dead ducklings have been pushed through the letterbox of the landlord of the Three Pilchards, who was a swan-baker (although he has since switched, in one of the more baffling twists in this story).

Michael Howard and Jack Straw are believed to be on their way to Cornwall now to stage photo-opportunities overlooking the harbour, where they will try to outdo one another in lurid

condemnation of the teenage boy behind the bloody postings who has been reprimanded – but let off – by the local constable.

It cannot be long before Tony Blair proposes a Royal Commission, or John Major sets up a task force, or Paddy Ashdown offers to let the swan and his mate live in his back garden in Yewell.

None of them, in this post-ideological age, will address the real philosophical issues raised by this little local difficulty. We must not simply be tough on dead duckling deliveries, we must be tough on the causes. Polperro, with its 1,585 population, ought to be a strong community, capable of resolving these kinds of conflict without provocation and rudeness. (The pub landlord responded to his tormentor by putting up a poster which read: "Latest score: Swan 6, Ducks 0." This was uncalled for.)

The trouble is that there are no real communities any more. Recent academic studies tried and failed to find a single village in England in which more than half the population was born there. And Polperro is turned every summer into a giant holiday camp, with 17,000 visitors. In these circumstances, it is surprising that people lose sight of their responsibilities to each other.

These are the questions that people are asking, up and down the country, at bus stops, in pubs (especially the Three Pilchards) and in focus groups.

But is it not just typical that no other newspaper is treating these issues with the seriousness they deserve? Instead, they are distracted by the latest populist posturing of men in suits in windowless rooms in London. Let us turn our minds as a nation to a village on the south coast of Cornwall which stands as a challenge to our moral universe.

## EU dragons need teeth

In recent days, we have heard a lot about European dragons. Little Englanders in both main parties seem to be running scared. But the lesson taught by the Calais blockade – lifted yesterday – was how weak the European Union still is. Freedom of commercial movement and fair fishing policies that conserve stocks – these either require Brussels to be given direct powers of enforcement or the means to compel nation states to fulfil their obligations... meaning more majority voting in the Council of Ministers. You do not need to be pro-Europe to urge reform of central EU institutions. One of the strongest justifications for European integration is freedom of trade, which can only be guaranteed if the Commission has teeth.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Hospitals that help patients to face death

Sir: No one could have read John Hoyland's moving description of his stepfather's death (22 April) without feeling both anger and sadness. Thirty years after the birth of the modern hospice movement, with the foundation of St Christopher's Hospice by Dame Cicely Saunders, this experience remains all too common.

In our view, it is the right of every person with a life-threatening illness to receive appropriate palliative care – care which integrates physical and psychosocial care. Whether or not they do so depends on the availability of resources as well as professional skills and attitudes. It is the responsibility of every health care professional to provide palliative care, calling in specialist colleagues if the need arises, as an integral component of good clinical practice.

What is to be done? John Hoyland acknowledges that hospices would have provided a "supportive, loving and cheerful environment" not found in the hospitals that cared for his stepfather. The growing number of palliative care teams in acute hospitals provides another solution – but only if their role is understood and they are asked to help.

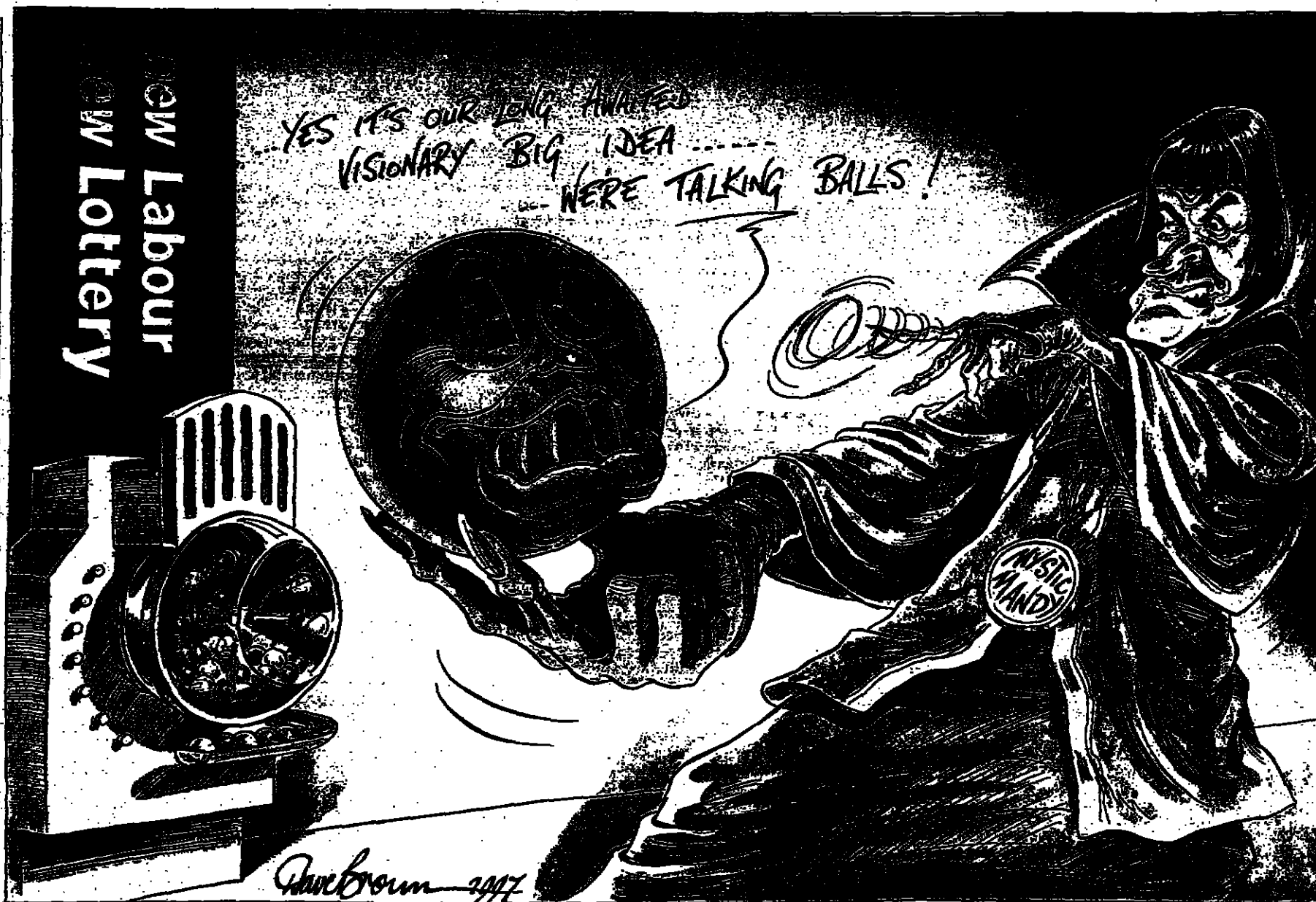
JEAN GARRIN  
Executive Director  
National Council for Hospice and Specialist Palliative Care Services  
London WC1

Sir: When my father, aged 82, suffered a stroke last year and had to be collected by ambulance from the floor of his bungalow in Swaffham, Norfolk, he was taken to the community hospital up the road. We were asked to consider the next step: getting him a place in a nursing home and selling his property. This was all done with great sensitivity. However, because Christmas was imminent, staff and social workers agreed that he should stay at Swaffham Cottage Hospital until the New Year so that he would not be upset.

Over the next few days Dad suffered a further series of small strokes. On Boxing Day we found him a ghost of himself, both physically and mentally. His doctor was waiting to speak to us. Sitting in the nurses' room, amid Christmas gifts, the doctor gently asked us what we wished to do next. We could ask to have Dad transferred to the big district hospital at King's Lynn, where every effort would be made to resuscitate him, or we could leave him quietly where he was. We children had no hesitation in saying we preferred Dad to be left in peace. We were confident this was what he wanted. He would get no quality of life from an extra few months bed-bound and semi-conscious.

Once we had made our decision plain, the doctor affirmed that it would be his too and he was glad this was the course we had chosen. Dad lasted a couple more days. He could not eat but was given a little to drink. He lay asleep in a clean bed, always newly washed, in crisply ironed pyjamas and with his hair combed, until he slipped away.

We felt that doctors and nurses were exemplary in their approach and treatment. Suffering was not prolonged, neither was anyone in the family left with a feeling of guilt. There were no indignities inflicted on Dad and, though death is always accompanied by a sadness, his treatment at the end



### Co-op movement down but not out

Sir: As a conviction co-operator, I question some of the assertions made by Hamish McRae ("Are we really becoming less co-operative?", 23 April).

The established co-operative movement may be down but it is certainly not out, with many societies improving on the poor results of past years (for example, the Oxford, Swindon and Gloucester Societies increased profits 33 per cent last year to £5.1m).

Additionally, a rapidly growing number of new co-operatives of various kinds are being set up all the time. These include credit unions and informal food co-ops as well as housing and workers' societies.

Agricultural buying co-ops now account for a larger turnover than the rest of the consumer movement combined and more than their private-sector competitors in this market.

I trust that all those who believe in the co-operative ideal will join their local retail society, shop in its stores and help to revitalise democracy and accountability by attending meetings and making their voices heard.

RICHARD BICKLE  
Norwich

### Nation of beggars and fund-raisers

Sir: Whatever the result of the election the next government will look more to charities for the delivery of welfare. The "charitisation" of the economy has been a feature of the last 18 years as much as privatisation has been.

The view of the Voluntary Action History Society is that for charities to thrive, a good strong public sector is a base requisite, without which anarchy and waste prevail. The pre-Beveridge lessons are there: charities and hospitals stumbled from financial crisis to crisis, provision was patchy and largely inefficient, and fraud and corruption rife. Today, charities are forced to spend resources in a grossly uneconomical way in the unseemly scramble for funds.

As England reaches the Millennium it has become a nation of fund-raisers, yet all parties want to be rid of beggars on the street. COLIN ROCHSTER (Chair)  
DR JUSTIN DAVIS SMITH (Secretary)  
RODNEY HEDLEY (Committee Member)  
Voluntary Action History Society  
London SE5

### Feel good enough for a gamble?

Sir: Our foreign-owned media have conspired to hide the feel-good factor from us. Overseas commentators, especially those in Europe, are bemused by the fact that the Conservative government gets little or no credit for creating the most successful economy in Europe.

Canvassing on the doorstep, we find that the feel-good factor is emerging in a strange way. Some voters are so confident in the future that they feel they can safely gamble on a period of socialist rule. This is a back-handed compliment to the Conservative government: but at what risk?

EDWARD KELLET-BOWMAN, MEP  
(Ipswich, Test & Avon, Con)  
Christchurch, Dorset

could not have been better. I still feel a great sense of debt to the medical staff attached to Swaffham Cottage Hospital. Kindness, not gross medical intervention, released us all.

JILL GALE  
Hampton, Middlesex

Sir: As someone who has worked for 19 years in the NHS, initially as a nurse and more recently as a doctor, I read John Hoyland's article about the death of his stepfather with a growing feeling of pain, sadness and shame.

A knee-jerk reaction of many in the profession will be to deny the accusations or to blame underfunding, shortage of staff or current management techniques. Many will point to the fact that the introduction of the speciality of geriatrics was aimed to tackle the problems of poor communication that may result from the piecemeal treatment of multi-system diseases – so common in the elderly, and argue for an increase in resources dedicated to this Cinderella branch of the health service.

Others will, rightly, highlight the role of the GP in co-ordinating care of the individual and suggest greater reduction in the role of hospitals. These points have been made forcefully within the medical and nursing professions for many years. However, a walk through the accident and emergency departments, corridors and wards of most of our hospitals will show that, at the level of the individual patient, the system frequently fails to deliver a humane and efficient service. There is a dire need for "care" as well as "cure" to be made a priority in the NHS.

ANDREW HALL  
Hexham, Northumberland

### Viewer choice in digital age

Sir: As the introduction of digital television in the UK is imminent, it is crucial that we understand the role that Electronic Programme Guides play in shaping digital television.

Over the next year or so the style of television viewing will change dramatically. Viewers will potentially receive up to 200 channels into their homes; but there will not be 200 buttons on their remote control. Viewers will have to use on-screen navigation tools to access the programmes they want.

It is the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) which will determine the services and programmes the viewers use. There is an urgent need to establish a code of conduct for navigation systems which ensures the needs and wishes of the viewers are adequately addressed. Viewers must have fast and easy access to schedules and services as well as to favoured channels or programmes.

The Tongue Report on public service broadcasting in the digital age, adopted by the European Parliament in 1996, emphasises the importance of fair and universal access to universally funded services through all delivery systems. In particular, the report calls for an obligation to ensure that public service programming is easy to find for viewers.

I welcome the Ofcom Guidelines (March 1997), which recognise the significance of EPGs and stress the principles of easy access and fair

competition. It is now up to the ITC, as the regulatory body concerned with quality broadcasting for viewers, to take this further.

It is of paramount importance that the viewer remains at the centre of regulators' concerns. The viewer's own preferences must be central to any regulation proposed. I believe the best result could be achieved by producing a working model of an EPG to research viewers' response in advance of any firm regulatory solution.

I have every confidence that if the views of the consumers are considered at the outset, the ITC's proposals would provide EPG standards which would ensure quality broadcasting in a multichannel digital environment.

CAROLE TONGUE MEP  
(London East, Lab)  
Ilford, Essex

### US threat to our airspace

Sir: Professor Philip Lawrence (letter, 23 April) writes about the importance of the aerospace industry to Europe, and the threats presented to it from the US.

There is a further threat he did not mention: the Regional Airspace Initiative now being advanced by the US. This, in anticipation of the proposed expansion of Nato, would place all air control, civil and military, for the whole of Europe – Western, Central and Eastern – under Nato; in effect, under the US military.

US industries would benefit enormously.

Last year, Neil Kinnock, the relevant EU commissioner, presented a White Paper on air traffic management to the European Commission, advocating the formation of a single, common regulatory body for European airspace, able to deal with both civil and military aspects of its use, and which other, non-EU European governments could adhere to. Last autumn, the Commission put a formal proposal to the Council of Ministers for the appropriate transformation of Eurocontrol into such a collaborative body.

The Major government has of course been "reluctant" to pool any sovereignty in such a European body – whether on "national" grounds or because the Americans wouldn't like it is not clear.

ELIZABETH YOUNG  
London W2

### Facts are treason to bellicose Brits

Sir: What has happened to informed debate? What is in Britain's interest that is not in the interest of any other member of the European Union? What is so wrong with the recent statement by Jacques Santer (report, 22 April)? The British electorate must be the worst informed people on the planet when it comes to the EU.

During this election we have had much noise and heat generated, particularly by the so-called

Euro-sceptics who seem to regard European Union and a single currency as a continuation of the Second World War. The arguments against Europe typically use words and phrases such as "surrender", "German domination", "fighting for Britain's interests", "European threat" and so on.

This is the kind of bellicose language that would appeal to bullies, bigots and those ignorant nationalists who like to "remember the war". Each time anyone says anything remotely factual or positive about Europe or the implications of a single currency, they are regarded as committing some sort of treasonable offence.

PETER VINTNER  
London SW19

Sir: I have just returned from a visit to a mining operation, small but with enormous potential, on a Mediterranean island under the aegis of the EU. Despite 30 per cent unemployment and the willingness of the local skilled workforce, a combination of EU restrictions and local laws forbids nationals to work one minute over 48 hours a week. I was therefore surprised to see bulldozers, excavators and dumper trucks going nineteen to the dozen on Saturday and Sunday. They were all manned by Australians.

A friend who runs a horticultural business in Yorkshire recently visited Holland. At seven o'clock one Friday evening, sales discussions between him and a Dutch manufacturer were interrupted by a banging on the factory door. It was the local police – demanding to know why the lights were on and to ascertain that all the workers had gone home.

MATTHEW ROBINSON  
London W8







## My race? You can mark me down as multiracial

What next for Tiger Woods, who must already be an even-money bet for *Time* magazine's Man of the Year, although 1997 is not yet a third of the way through? A fortnight ago, he blasted the sport of golf into a new age. Now he threatens to detonate a bomb under an even older and more pervasive American practice: that of identifying people by their race.

Yesterday he appeared on that most influential of American tribunes, the Oprah Winfrey Show, and introduced a new word into the language. He did not regard himself as black, but as "Cablinasian", a compound term covering his own exotic provenance: a dash of Caucasian, a dollop of black, a leavening of Indian and a topping of Asian, in his case part Thai and part Chinese.

Now young Tiger was being a mite disingenuous, having dedicated his victory at Augusta not to Cablinasians but to black golfers past, so long denied the right of even competing there. For the average American, too, as he well knows, he is a black. Indeed even his own father, referring to the traditional attire of the Masters winner, described him as "a black in a green jacket". But the age of the Cablinasian has dawned, and not before time. America's way of classification by race is collapsing under the weight of its absurdities.

The practice is as old as the country, dating back to the new republic's first census in 1790, with its three categories of "free white male", "free white female", and "slave". Later the process was refined, with the addition of "mulatto", "quadroon" and "octoroon". But early this century these niceties were scrapped, and replaced in practice by the infamous "one drop" principle that helped seal the segregation of the races in America. One speck of black in the pot of white paint, this theory ran, and purity was irretrievably lost.

From the Fifties on, of course, attitudes to race (official ones, at least) changed. Jackie Robinson played baseball for the Brooklyn Dodgers, and the civil rights movement developed. With this noble-minded programme of affirmative action, designed to combat racial discrimination in school and workplace. Suddenly that drop of black blood could have advantages in a white world. Claim it, and a place at college, on a training course or in federal or local government might be secured under quotas reserved for blacks and minorities, despite academic results that, had you applied as a white, would have been too poor to qualify.

The system, of course, could be, and has been, abused — one reason why affirmative action and quotas are so unfashionable today. Perhaps, a person identifies his own race; hand that task to a government bureaucrat and you summon the shades of Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa. But racial self-identification fails for other reasons, too. The present American census form offers seven specific choices: black, white, Hispanic, American Indian, Alaska native, Asian, and Pacific islander, plus an eighth category of "other". In the 1990 census, almost 4 per cent of the population opted for this last, despite its connotation of subspecies or second-class citizenship.



Rupert Cornwell

The golfing hero Tiger Woods identifies himself as Cablinasian, a mix of Caucasian, black, American-Indian and Asian

If nothing changes, one of this number, when the next census rolls around in 2000, will be Tiger Woods. Thanks in part to him, however, there is a distinct chance that the situation may change.

Our Cablinasian Masters champion is but one of the millions of Americans who can only be classified as multiracial. By 1994, according to the US Census Bureau, there were 3 million interracial couples in the country, and even black Americans, traditionally less prone to marry outside their race, were doing so three times as often as they did in 1970. The method of counting them, however, no longer measures up. (Nor, incidentally, does the language. Spanish has the word *mestizo* for people of mixed race, to which no equivalent exists in English.)

Why, the ever-growing multiracial contingent argues, should its members tick a single racial category, denying a half or a quarter of their heritage? The present classification may suit the purposes of affirmative action. But does a multiracial person belong to a minority — and, if so, which minority? Theoretically there is another answer, of ticking more than one box on the census form. But in a country addicted to statistics, that would create the statistician's nightmare of totals adding up to more than 100 per cent.

True, black Americans do still often argue for the *status quo* as a means of preserving a sense of ethnic identity, or, in the case of radicals such as Louis Farrakhan, of strengthening demarcation lines between the races.

Already, however, several states have taken the obvious step of adding a "multiracial" category to their official forms, and this week the Congress held hearings on whether to make similar changes to the census form and other federal documents.

But why not make the advent of the Cablinasian Tiger-Wood a cue for a bolder, even better move — that of scrapping official racial classification in its entirety? One strand in the eternal American dilemma over race is the contradiction between the goal of fostering a sense of racial pride and identity, and the notion of America as melting-pot, where every ethnic and racial tension one day will miraculously dissolve. These aims ought not to be contradictory. But in an imperfect human world they are, and formally categorising people by their race only makes the problem worse.

More so even than General Colin Powell, Tiger Woods offers some balm for America's racial wounds. Beyond his graceful manner and amazing athletic ability, he embodies something new in America, of multiracialism on the march. Not that awful, twisted parody of multiracialism that was the OJ Simpson affair, but a reality that lies in the face of his country's obsession with racial differences. Like ever-growing millions of Americans, he is a walking melting-pot. If, from his example, America can somehow devise a new concept of race, the benefits will be for all of us.

Like this writer, English by culture, British by passport, and beneath that in my veins courses a dollop of Irish, a drop of Jewish, a pinch of German, combined with a heap of Anglo-Saxon. Scratch the skin, and we're all multiracial.

## They want our vote, not our opinions

by Suzanne Moore

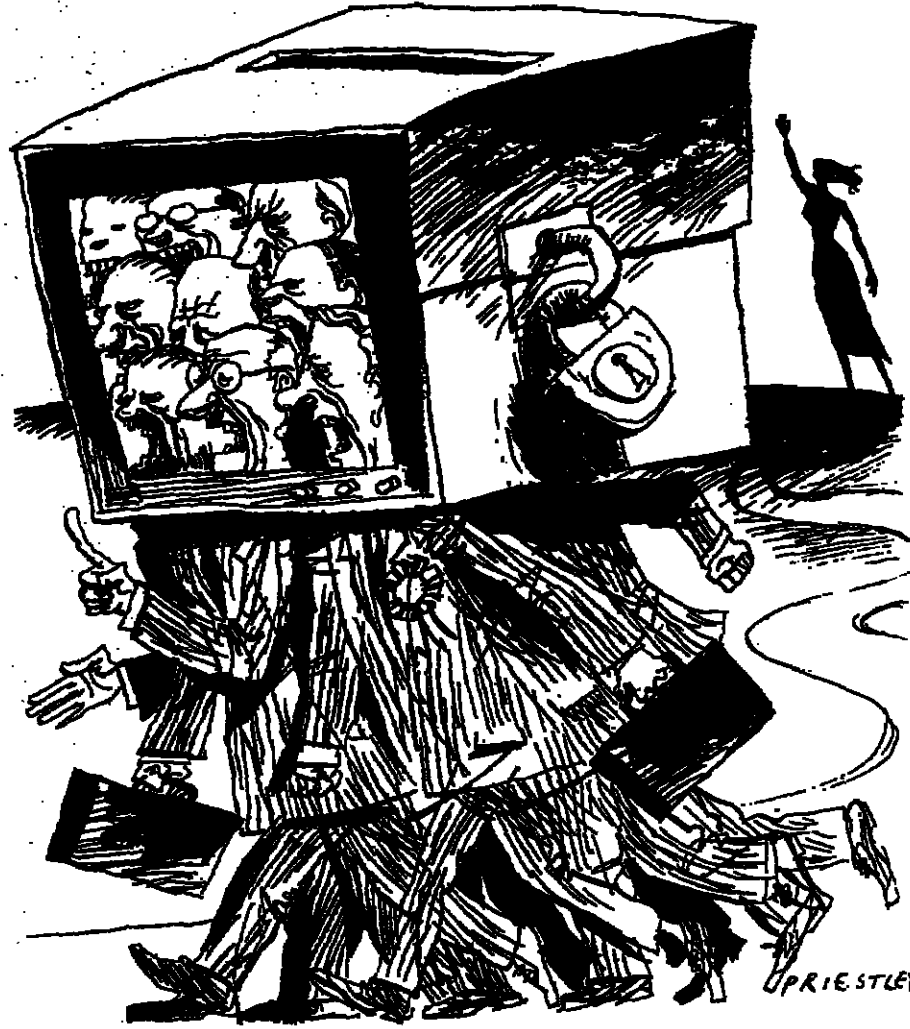
Hang on a minute guys. As Jon Snow pleaded on *Channel 4 News* the other night, "There's nothing that turns the electorate off more than to see politicians arguing about statistics." Not quite. There is nothing that turns off some of the electorate more than seeing four men bickering about figures, especially when two of them are Michael Howard and Jack Straw.

Cast your mind back, if you can, to a few weeks ago. This election was going to be about women. Women's votes were to decide its results. The gender gap recognised by the Clinton campaign was to be addressed. All those female floating voters, the twitchy switchers, were to be wooed ceaselessly in terms of policies and presentation. So what has happened?

A very simple but effective piece of research called *Watching Women*, published yesterday by The Fawcett Society, shows exactly what has happened. It is basically a head count of the women who have appeared during the election news coverage. The week monitored was 4-10 April, and the programmes studied were the daily election output of all four terrestrial channels. A record was made of those contributing to, presenting, commenting on, reporting the election news, whether they were Michael Buerk, or a vox-popped woman in the street. The aim was to see how comprehensive this coverage was in reflecting the population with regard to gender.

During the period monitored women made up only 16 per cent of appearances in the election news coverage, and only 20 per cent of election news items were covered by female journalists. Female politicians hardly made it on to the screen at all, with eight appearances compared with 127 appearances by male politicians. Seventeen male academics were consulted during that week and not one female one. The Fawcett Society points out that, contrary to popular opinion, women watch just as much news as men. In fact they watch the main television news programmes in slightly higher numbers. As Shelagh Diplock, director of the society, says, "Women's votes will decide the result of the next election but women are almost invisible in the election news coverage. With a week to go before polling day, broadcasters would need to use wall-to-wall women to get anywhere near restoring the balance."

Now, one might argue that even wall-to-wall women might not impress female voters, that it is a nonsense to suggest that women can only be governed by women, that it does not matter that much of what we are



The great unmentionable is that women want power. Fakers that we are, we hulk men into thinking they can carry on as normal

watching, listening to and reading is dominated by men. Yet the overwhelming feeling this produces is a mixture of tiredness and boredom and — if you can be bothered — anger. If men cannot make the effort now, during this supposedly crucial time, when can they?

If the spin doctors on all sides feel that their female politicians are not an asset, if all the experts just happen to be male, if serious interviews can be left only to the Pannan/Dimbly brotherhood, if when "ordinary women" are interviewed they are captioned as "mothers", "single parents" or "widows", what hope is there?

The big Es — Europe, the economy, employment, are we, are we told by men, what this election is about. But employment seems to refer only to male employment, and the economy and Europe are presumed too complicated for those of us sadly born without penises to

comprehend. What we end up with is patronising little bundles of issues that are aimed at women, but assume women's only interest is the family. Yet the issues that relate the domestic sphere to the public world of work — parental leave, child care, the rights of part-time workers, the minimum wage, child benefit, pensions — have been completely overshadowed.

I do not expect much from the Tories, but I was led to expect more from Labour. What a shower of arrogance has rained upon us. If spin doctors took any notice of their own focus groups, these men would not hide away the disavowed and disarming women politicians such as Clare Short and Mo Mowlam in favour of the acceptable clones, such as Harman and Jowell. They would not have turned Cherie into a Steppford wife whom one expects to malfunction at any minute. "You must give me that

recipe, you must give me that recipe..." The theory that Cherie is in fact an alien — "Just look at the eyes" — was put to me fairly persuasively the other day by a man who appeared otherwise fairly sane.

Perhaps, though, it is all our fault. Perhaps we just don't try hard enough. Perhaps we are just not hard enough for the bally world of press conferences and high jinks on the back of the bus. Shirley Williams says that at press conferences the female journalists are not the ones asking the questions. The cliché is that women just do not function well in these adversarial situations,

but that is not the whole story. The point-scoring, the hinted-at, behind-the-scenes intimacy, the social lubricants that make the whole machinery run, were designed by men for men. It is not that women are somehow superior. We can be as awful, as arrogant, as obtuse, as any man. All we are after is what men take for granted: that our gender is not constantly noted — and that can be achieved only by a more equal balance.

We have, I fear, been too reasonable for too long. We have tried to seduce men into thinking we can enter into their system without disrupting it, that we can slip in quietly through the back door. The result, as the Fawcett research so clearly shows, is that nothing much changes; that politics lags behind the real world, where women are achieving.

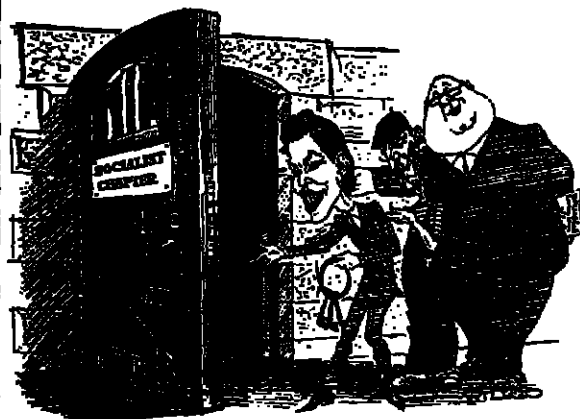
Of course, the great unmentionable, the thing we keep to ourselves, is the idea that we want power. Oh no, we don't want power, we say, bating our eyelashes; just equality, a fairer system. Fakers that we are, we hulk men into thinking they can carry on as normal, that there will just be a bit more skirt around. The truth is that more women would mean fewer men.

In terms of this election it would have meant that the boys would not have been interviewed by the other boys quite so often; it would have meant that a whole raft of issues from gay rights (remember them?) to nursery education to the feminisation of poverty would have been taken more seriously. It would have meant fewer women being observed through two-way mirrors by researchers, and more women observing. It would have meant that the gap between the views of middle-aged men and the views of vast swaths of the population who do not need to be told that family and unemployment structures have changed radically would begin to be addressed. Who knows, it might even have meant that more of us felt that the election had something to do with us.

A week to go, and we are still expected to be grateful for crumbs from the high table. But we are not; we are hungry for change, a change that means more than a change of government. Why should we support a system that makes us invisible? If those who would govern us can't even see us, why on earth should we see any of their points of view? It's not the switchers that should make the politicians so nervous, it's the switched off.

## ADVERTISEMENT

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## Ulster dialogue? It's a slanging match

The women's coalition is speaking up for consensus amid Unionist rancour, says David McKittrick

Three members of the Northern Ireland women's coalition are standing in the election on a platform of consensus and accommodation, apparently undeterred by their traumatic introduction to party politics in the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue.

The women tell with amused disbelief of their experience in the forum, an institution which has fallen spectacularly short of the official aspiration that it might promote dialogue and understanding.

It has cost the Government more than £5m in less than a year; it is supposed to bring the politicians closer together; both Labour and Tories have promised to prolong its life; yet it has become a byword for acrimonious division.

It has become the scene of rancour. In a recent debate on BSE, members had some difficulty in making out the words of the women's coalition representative, Monica McWilliams. As she spoke, the Rev Ian Paisley's son, Ian Jr, kept up a commentary: "Mooo," he intoned. "Mooo, mooo, mooo. Mooooooo." It was a fairly typical day in the forum.

In that instance the traditionally bovine Paisley sense of humour was in evidence, but on many other occasions the forum has lived up to its reputation for straight unpleasantness and discord. "Sit down, you are an idiot," Paisley Jr called to Unionist MP Ken Maginnis. "Shut up, you," he shouted at another member.

"Idiot" is a popular Democratic Unionist Party word. Iris Robinson, wife of the DUP MP Peter, said of the

women's coalition: "They are doing their best to destroy anything that smacks of Unionism or Protestantism. Thank God only 7,000 idiots voted for these women."

The tone, in other words, has been not one of courteous discourse but of confrontational insult. The *Hansard*-style record of proceedings is studded with unparliamentary remarks: "Excuse me, Mr Chairman," one Unionist interjected. "You were not on the gin and tonic last night, by any chance?"

Sometimes the tone can go beyond uncouthness and verge on menace. "There is, if people are not careful, going to be violence in Northern Ireland," Democratic Unionist Jack McKee warned during a debate on loyalist marches. "The blood of the Ulster people will run red in the streets if our traditions are interfered with. I want to say: they ain't seen nothing yet."

Like many Unionist members, Mr McKee is strong on asserting loyalist marching rights. Thus in a debate on roads and transport his concern was not confined to the provision of thoroughfares. "I want to say one thing before starting properly," he declared. "It is all right building these roads, but are we going to be allowed to march up and down them? That is one issue that will have to be tackled."

The institution opened its doors in June of last year as part of the talks process. It sends delegates on to the main talks, but itself meets in public main talks, but itself meets in public one day a week. Technically it has 110 members, but Sinn Féin never took its seats and the other nationalist party, the SDLP, resigned and withdrew within weeks, saying it was clear the

forum was set to be a scene of acrimony rather than dialogue.

That left the institution as an essentially nationalist-free zone, with 57 Unionists, headed by David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party and Ian Paisley's DUP, dominating 15 other members of five small parties. The departure of the nationalists did little to improve the tenor of debate, a visitor reporting: "The forum was supposed to promote reconciliation. It fairly heaves with hatred."

**6 The forum was supposed to promote reconciliation. It fairly heaves with hatred 9**

Even with the nationalists gone there has been no sense of dialogue between the Unionist blocs and the smaller parties. The leader of the middle-of-the-road Alliance party, Lord Alderdice, said: "It is an absolute tragedy that, having got the SDLP in the forum, the Unionists took the very first possible opportunities to drive them out, and have demonstrated no appetite for dialogue and reconciliation."

According to Mrs McWilliams, "It is a very nasty place to be at times. There have been days when I put my hand on my head with despair. The level of sectarian commentary is as raw as anything you'd hear in a street fight. Everything is completely segregated. In the early days, if we walked into the ladies' toi-

lets any Unionist women walked out. The only improvement is to the extent that they now remain in the toilet."

Another prominent figure added: "It was a purposely wasted opportunity. It was wasted in the way the parliamentaries talk about wasting people. Right from the start it was appalling — poisonous, vitriolic, a waste of time."

Four of the minor parties have withdrawn from the forum's parades committee, the women's coalition protesting that the committee, which includes the deputy grand master of the Orange Order, would not meet the Catholic residents' groups. The women are now contesting three Westminster seats, including that of Mr Paisley, but are unlikely to cause him much trouble.

As an exercise in democracy the forum has not come cheap. Leasing and fitting out the third floor of a large city-centre office block cost £3.5m, while a further £2m has been spent on running costs. Delegates are paid £100 for each day they attend, plus travelling and subsistence expenses.

The Northern Ireland Office is unable to say how much money has reached the pockets of the individual members, but since Unionists make up 80 per cent of the attending members they have obviously received the bulk of the money. It is clear that for the larger Unionist parties the forum is something of a goldmine.

The institution was a Unionist conception, coming into being largely as a result of pressure on John Major from David Trimble. Some in government hoped it would serve a useful function, but few now cling to that

belief. It has just been made known, however, that the Government has bowed to Mr Trimble's pressure to extend its life for at least another year.

That pressure was heavy, Mr Trimble even threatening to pull the plug on the entire talks process if the forum were closed. He announced publicly: "As we've said — no forum, no talks."

The Government is clearly anxious to avoid alienating Mr Trimble and his Westminster voting strength. Labour has followed suit and promised that the forum will not be shut down.

But even on the strict merits of the issue, the choice was a difficult one. The forum shows no sign of promoting dialogue, and at one level few non-Unionists would shed any tears at its demise. On a deeper level, however, it can take years to set up such institutions, and the idea of scrapping such an establishment gives pause even to many of its critics.

But the forum's performance, coupled with the lack of headway in the main talks, has been a deeply disillusioning experience for many of those who had hoped round-table talks offered the main avenue for political progress.

One senior political figure said privately: "This has had a big impact on me. It has been incredibly frustrating. I have concluded that if voting patterns remain the same in the Westminster election, then there is absolutely no chance at all of any kind of negotiated settlement in Northern Ireland — absolutely none." Thus far in the election campaign, there is little to suggest that the future conduct of politics will be much different from the past.



# CWS vows to hound Lanica chief and his City co-conspirators 'to their graves'

*sokaisha scandal* would hurt profits this year, Nomura predicted it would remain in the black even if customers continued to desert and if it was ordered by the regulatory authorities to shut down trading on its own account for several months.

In March alone, when the scandal broke, profits were halved, said Takemichi Arima, director of Nomura's finance department. "This year will be difficult. But by cutting costs, we'll probably manage to stay in the black." Earlier this week every top executive resigned from Nomura.

تمكنا من الأصل



# Melmoth the Warrior has excelled himself



**COMMENT**

The CWS chief executive's sense of rage at the disloyalty and thievery of one of his own executives is one thing. But it is nothing against the anger he feels towards the City for its fee-hungry willingness to enter this sordid conspiracy.

With Andrew Regan and his team in full flight and the Co-op promising to pursue them to their graves, the time has perhaps come to ask how the young financier, backed by all those highly paid City advisers, could so horribly have misjudged this extraordinary smash-and-grab raid.

The first setback came when the plans leaked. Though newspapers and share traders thrive on such things, leaking scarcely ever works to the advantage of the bidder, for it gives the target time to muster its defences and prepare the ground against invaders. In this case the leak was near disastrous. The Regan assault was in effect a consortium bid. Even when things are going to plan, consortium bids are notoriously difficult to keep on the rails. It only requires one of the moving parts to break ranks, or get cold feet, and the whole thing falls apart.

But perhaps the Regan camp's most serious mistake was to underestimate the opposition. Graham Melmoth, chief executive of the CWS, has proved a feisty and highly effective fighter. If Mr Regan believed the CWS was such an ensconced organisation that it would simply roll over and let its tummy be tickled, he could not have been more wrong. The Co-op has excelled itself with one of the most hard-hitting, irreverent and masterful defence campaigns in years. Using the press and the courts as its main battle weapons, the Co-op has managed to see off the bid before it was ever tabled.

Nor is Mr Melmoth prepared to back off now that he has won and allow the City to sweep the whole thing under the carpet. Virtually every financial regulator in the land from the Inland Revenue's special investigations unit to the DTI, from Inuro to the Serious Fraud Office, and from the Securities and Futures Authority to the Stock Exchange, is being prevailed upon to investigate the matter and act. No wonder Nomura got cold feet. It's in enough trouble already back home in Japan without a British financial scandal to cope with as well.

Now that the balloon has gone up, we are being treated to an extraordinary and disreputable display of City advisers running for cover. According to the Co-op, almost no legal undertaking is too great for these people to sign if it means keeping these matters from coming to court. Never darken our doors again? Yes, yes, we'll sign that, no problem.

Mr Melmoth's sense of rage at the disloyalty and thievery of one of his own executives is one thing. But it is nothing against the anger he feels towards the City for its fee-hungry willingness to enter this sordid conspiracy, knowingly making use of stolen CWS material. He is right to push for the strongest possible action and retribution. This has been a shameful episode for the City, matching some of its darkest moments.

One good thing may have come out of it, however. The affair has blown away some dusty old cobwebs within the Co-operative

movement, forcing it to re-examine its role and purpose in the modern world. Change is now inevitable. The only question is what shape it will take.

## Sentiment unlikely to rescue Eurotunnel

It is a rum sort of rights issue when the existing shares have virtually to double in price before the new ones can be offered at any sort of discount. But then Eurotunnel is a rum sort of company. Barring a miracle or a lapse into insanity in the markets, this particular rights issue is one that Eurotunnel's long-suffering shareholders will not have to worry their heads about.

The arithmetic works like this. When Eurotunnel launches its £8.7bn debt refinancing this summer it intends to swap about £1bn of that debt for shares priced at around £1.30. Since the shares are currently languishing at 71p it would take a re-rating of truly heroic proportions to get them to the point where anyone would want to touch the new equity, save for Eurotunnel's bankers. They are bent over the proverbial barrel and have little choice but to take the shares or put the company into liquidation.

It is a fair bet, however, that somewhere among the 720,000 tortured souls who make up Eurotunnel's share register there will be the odd patriotic Englishman or crazed French dentist who insists on his inalienable

right to throw more good money after bad into this hole in the ground.

It is just conceivable that sentiment will move Eurotunnel's way. But for that to happen it will have to get another 35 years on its concession and the Anglo-French Safety Authority will have to bless a freight shuttle design which is akin to a potential inferno on wheels.

But at least for once the interests of banks and shareholders are aligned. There is every incentive to get the share price up because the nearer the strike price gets to the market price, the more likely it is to tempt shareholders into the water. That would allow the banks to exchange their debt at par when it is trading in the secondary debt market at around 40 per cent of face value.

Fantasy? Almost certainly but that may not stop some shareholders taking the plunge even if the prospectus has a health warning printed on every page.

## Iverson slips on her first banana skin

So now we know. Despite her high reputation as the woman who revived the fortunes of Mothercare, the woman who can do no wrong, Ann Iverson, cannot walk on water after all. Last year when Laura Ashley shares were riding high at 220p, valuing the company at 50 times prospective earnings, the market was factoring in something

miraculous from her. Reality broke through yesterday but not before giving poor Laura a brutal spanking as the shares lost almost one third of their value. Can it be long before Ms Iverson follows the path trodden out of the door by her likeable predecessor, Jim Maxmin? Over-ordering stock and having to slash prices to shift it does, after all, seem a pretty fundamental and wholly avoidable management mistake.

But perhaps such a harsh judgement is premature. Ms Iverson claims almost every aspect of the business needed fixing when she came nearly two years ago.

She has been attempting to improve the merchandise, reposition the brand, get manufacturing costs under control and pursue a strategy of aggressive expansion in the toughest of markets all at the same time. It is hardly surprising there has been a hiccup. There may be more.

Up until now, her performance has actually been pretty good. Her latest set of profits at £16.2m were last achieved back in 1989. The previous regime hardly made any profits for five years. So while this is a bad slip up, she's not been doing too badly.

We are still a long way from Ms Iverson's target of double-digit margins on sales, but she refuses to abandon it and still promises to reach it within four years of her appointment.

Ms Iverson can perhaps be forgiven this, her first banana skin, but she better just pray it is also her last.

# Government urged to cool economy by raising taxes

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

The next government should raise taxes rather than interest rates to cool down the overheating economy, a leading business organisation said yesterday. The British Chambers of Commerce warned of wage pressures at home because of skill shortages and damage to sales overseas because of the strong pound.

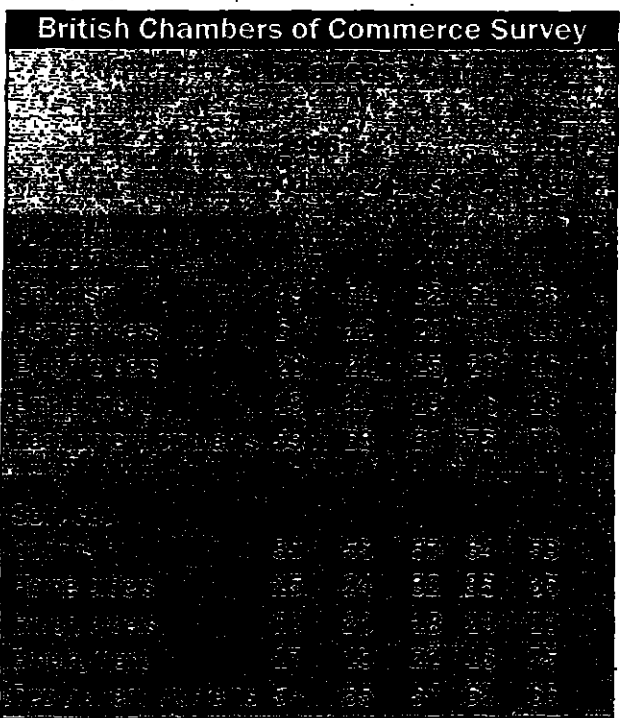
This analysis is backed by a new forecast from the London Business School published this morning. It predicts that growth will exceed 3 per cent this year, taking the number of unemployment benefit claimants below 1.5 million. Tougher policy action is needed to head off an inflationary boom, the report concludes, and taxes should be used to take some of the strain off interest rates.

Both followed a similar call by the Confederation of British Industry on Wednesday.

Official figures on Britain's recent trade performance published yesterday showed tentative signs that the increase in sterling during the past six months has started to hit export volumes. The BCC survey was the latest in a series reporting a tailing off in new export orders.

Yesterday's survey, which covers services as well as manufacturing, reported the lowest exports for four years. In manufacturing sales growth had continued to slow, while in services the growth had slowed from its record level in the final quarter of last year.

The weaker export outlook was offset by the strength of domestic demand. Official figures for national output in the first quarter of this year, due this morning, are expected to show



growth well above the economy's sustainable trend.

Job creation plans remained buoyant, according to the chambers of commerce survey, with services companies planned employment at the highest level this decade. But this was leading to recruitment difficulties.

David Richardson, BCC president, said there was a danger skill shortages would fuel wage inflation. "The priority must be to tackle the skills problem which is swiftly becoming the Achilles' heel of the British economy," he said.

Ian Peters, deputy director-general, said: "Whilst many commentators believe that interest rates will have to rise after the election in order to contain inflation, this will have the

damaging effect of hurting manufacturing investment and export competitiveness."

Separate figures yesterday showed the gap between imports and exports had widened.

The deficit on trade in goods rose to £758m in February from £535m the previous month. March's deficit with non-EU countries increased to £606m from £437m in February.

Lower import prices kept the import bill subdued. The underlying volume of imports in the latest three months' figures was 6.4 per cent higher than a year earlier. Export volumes were up 6.2 per cent over the same period, but fell 1.5 per cent in the latest month and were virtually flat in the latest three months.

# Strong sterling knocks Vickers and ICI profits

Michael Harrison

Two of British industry's best-known names yesterday fell victim to the strength of sterling as both Vickers and ICI warned that the rampant pound would hit profits this year.

Vickers unsettled the market by disclosing that first-half profits would be less than the £31.8m achieved last year because of falling export orders and thinner margins. The announcement prompted a 10 per cent slump in its share price from 220p to 202.5p.

Sir Richard Lloyd, chairman, told the annual shareholders' meeting that profit for the first quarter was below that for the corresponding period last year.

"Export orders - and let me remind you that in recent years Vickers has exported on average about 50 per cent of UK turnover - are proving harder to obtain and profit margins on them tend to be thinning," he said.

Meanwhile ICI warned that the pound's rise was likely to wipe something like £120m from profits this year. The

company's chairman, Sir Ronnie Hampel told the annual shareholders' meeting: "The strength of sterling is worrying and, if it remains high, can only have a significant and debilitating effect of British industry and exports in particular."

The comments came alongside the announcement of a sharp fall in first quarter profits from £202m to £65m and helped drive ICI shares down by 20p to 720p in heavy trading.

Analysts are now pencilling in profits of around £500m compared with earlier estimates of £600m-£650m. When ICI announced its full year figures in February, it said that the pound's strength was likely to knock £80m-£90m from this year's profits.

Since then, however, sterling has appreciated still further. In the first quarter the stronger pound reduced profits by about £40m compared with £15m in the final quarter of 1996.

ICI said that exchange rate movements together with weak prices in its Tiolix and polyester divisions had reduced profits by £150m. Ris-

ing oil prices also exacerbated the squeeze on margins and depressed exports, it added.

The company refused to comment on reports that it is preparing a £40m offer for Unilever's specialty chemicals business, which was put up for sale earlier this year. Nor did it have any news to report on the planned flotation of Tiolix.

However, the strength of sterling may force it to accelerate its job-cutting programme this year. ICI intends to shed a further 10,000 jobs over the next two years, taking the workforce down to about 55,000.

In the last four years it has shed a fifth of its workforce. About 7,000 jobs will be direct losses and a further 3,000 will disappear from the payroll when the Tiolix flotation is completed.

Earlier this year British Steel confirmed that it was bringing forward its job reduction programme to shed 5,000 to 10,000 workers over the next five years, mainly as a result of the currency squeeze on profits.

Investment column, page 24

With only 428 working days left before the launch of the single European currency, the Bank of England yesterday warned against complacency over preparations. Even if Britain does not join in the first wave, banks will need to start altering their computer systems within the next few months, writes Diane Coyle.

But banks' ability to take this advice, in the latest quarterly

# Banks told to prepare for EMU

update on preparations for the euro, depends on decisions at the pan-European level, many of which have not yet been taken. The Bank urges the European Monetary Institute and EU Commission to press ahead with decisions on key issues.

The Bank's warning not to count on EMU being delayed depends on decisions at the pan-European level, many of which have not yet been taken. The Bank urges the European Monetary Institute and EU Commission to press ahead with decisions on key issues.

to the new currency, and it includes the recommendations of a working party concerning issues such as whether and how different types of security should be re-denominated from national currencies into euros. But even though UK practi-

tioners have reached a conclusion, Europe-wide agreement is still needed, the Bank said.

The Bank of England is continuing to lobby the French and Germans over Target, the planned inter-bank payments system, under the single currency. It has so far failed to win their agreement that the UK can use the system if it opts out of EMU.

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## business

# Regulator set to approve British Gas price cuts in South-west

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, is poised to approve British Gas's controversial package of selective price cuts in a ruling which could provoke uproar among rival suppliers and have long-term consequences for competition.

Her decision on the discount scheme, which has cut some British Gas bills by up to 12 per cent in the first domestic competition trial area in the South-west of England, will not be announced until after the election. Earlier indications from Ofgas, the watchdog, of a pre-poll announcement were optimistic given an unexpectedly large response to the public consultation exercise.

Centrica, the demerged

British Gas supply business, revealed the price cuts last month after losing 20 per cent of its customers to rival suppliers in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset since the trial began last May.

The package, the first time British Gas has varied its tariff on a regional basis, also gives direct debit customers a 6 per cent cut, doubling their discount, if they sign up for a year.

Ms Spottiswoode is understood to have told some rival gas companies that she is "minded" to let Centrica continue with the price cuts, known as Value Plus. The move would be another sign of the thaw in relations with the company since it demerged from British Gas, now BGC, in February. Earlier this week Ms Spottiswoode indicated she would be sympathetic to Cen-

trica's efforts to avoid Labour's windfall utility tax.

Ofgas has also studied the wording of the Gas Act which paved the way for competition. It says her role is to "establish" competition but does not say she must "sustain" it. Centrica has argued the loss of 20 per cent of its market share means competition has been achieved.

Critics of Value Plus argue it would transform the competitive playing field. The chief executive of a large oil group, who did not want to be named, warned the price cuts would discourage the company from moving into the domestic gas market. He said the group was waiting to see how competition developed and would examine potential profit margins.

Ofgas said it had received more than 80 responses to the

consultation process, of which more than half were in Centrica's favour. The company has mobilised considerable support from some unusual sources, including letters to Ofgas from three of its banks privately arguing that the cuts were a vital plank of its business plan.

The Gas Consumers Council recognised Value Plus would benefit some consumers but strongly opposed its introduction. Sue Shipman, GCC director, warned that the decision could stifle competition as the industry moved towards full national choice next year.

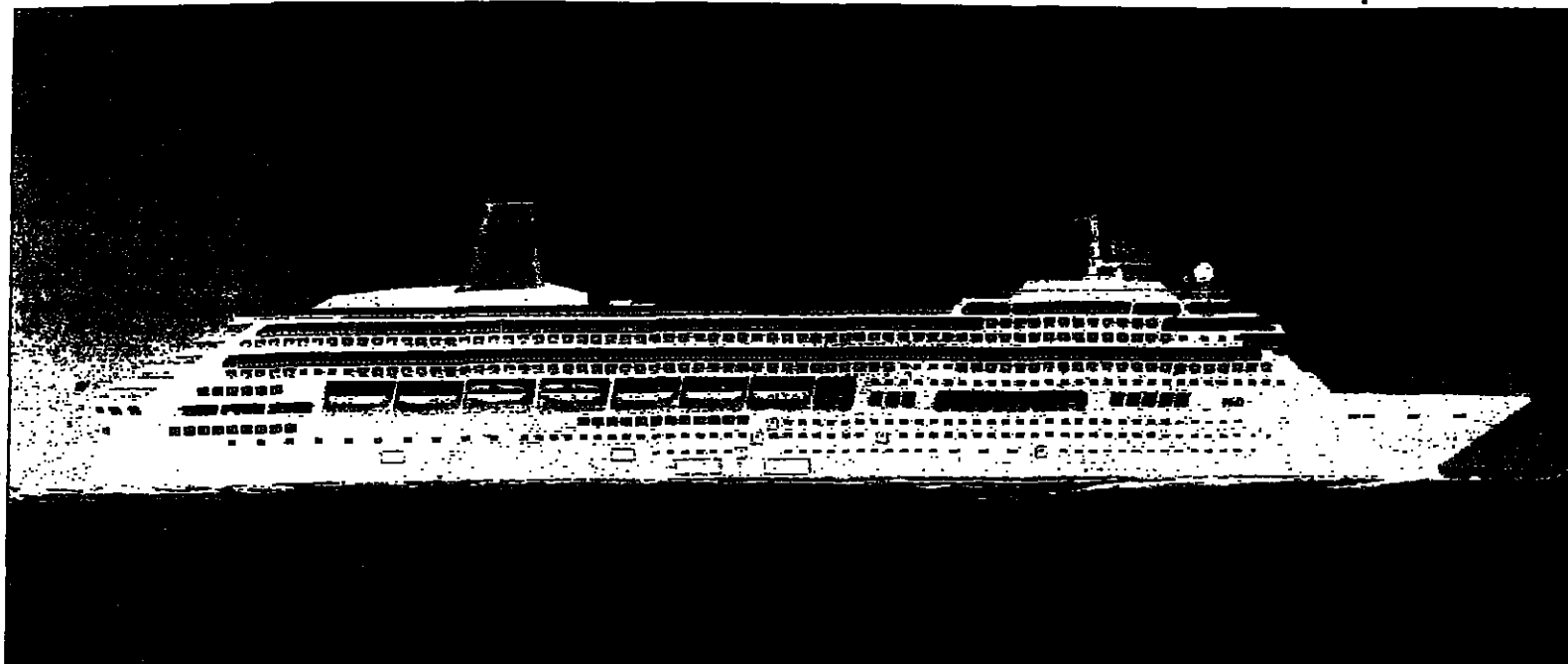
Four of the largest independent suppliers, Beacon, Eastern, Calortex and ScottishPower, all vehemently opposed the price cuts. Evidence from Calortex claimed that, since the introduction of Value Plus,

numbers of homes switching from British Gas had dropped alarmingly.

The independent gas companies say British Gas could extend the price cuts to the newest trial area of Kent and Sussex, where competition is more fierce. In two months Centrica has lost about 20 per cent of its customers. Ms Spottiswoode has told rival suppliers her ruling on the South-west would not necessarily apply to the South-east.

Alan Liss, Beacon's managing director, said competition was not established yet. "These are still trial runs. The damage has already been done by British Gas in encouraging customers to believe if they stay with the company they will eventually get the same discounts. There's still tremendous inertia in the market."

## P&O cruises into the new century with £200m round-the-world superliner



A new £200m superliner would enter the cruise market in the millennium, P&O Cruises announced yesterday. The 76,000-ton ship will be built at the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany and will be delivered for service in the spring of 2000. The ship, which has yet to be named, will carry more than 1,800

passengers on world-wide cruises operating out of the UK. More than 400 cabins will have private balconies and 22 cabins will be designed for passengers with disabilities. Gwyn Hughes, managing director of P&O Cruises, said the superliner would move cruise ship design into the new century and set new

standards. The 886ft-long ship will join the *Oriana*, the *Arcadia*, which enters service this year following the retirement of the *Canberra*, and the *Victoria* in the P&O fleet. Earlier this year P&O's subsidiary, Princess Cruises, announced plans to introduce a 77,000-ton liner in 1999, to be called *Ocean Princess*.

## Betterware chairman defends £9.8m dividend

Magnus Grimond

Andrew Cohen, the executive chairman of Betterware, whose family effectively controls the catalogue retail group, yesterday defended a special £9.8m dividend being paid to benefit his family just days before the possible election of a Labour government. The company announced it planned to make a one-off payment of 9.31p a share to accompany a final dividend of 2.52p for the last financial year. News of the payment, which comes a year after Betterware paid its first special dividend of 2.6p a share, helped the shares rise 10p to 12.2p yesterday.

Mr Cohen, who with his family owns around 46 per cent of the group's shares, is not unknown to controversy. Shares in

the group crashed from 278p in 1993 to 38.5p in 1995 after the family raised £31m from the sale of part of their stake just months before Betterware was forced to issue a series of profit warnings and announced a slump in its annual results.

One City observer said of the latest move: "There is a problem in paying out a £9.5m dividend principally to yourself. You could say it's in the interest of all the shareholders, but it is in their interest to flush all of the cash into Mr Cohen's pockets just before a general election? I don't know."

Mr Cohen denied any selfish motives yesterday and said the decision to pay the dividend had nothing to do with the election, declaring himself "not a political animal".

The proposed special divi-

dend was being made for the benefit of all the shareholders, he said.

Referring to his family and his fellow directors, he said: "We kept 50 per cent of the equity all the way through. As far as we are concerned, the company is very cash-generative and we have no plans for this cash."

He said there would have been other complaints if the group had used the money, some £12.6m at the beginning of March, to buy in its shares, which might have raised earnings per share, boosting performance-linked executive bonuses, or increased the family's control.

The announcement came as Betterware announced a rise in pre-tax profits from £9.29m to £11.5m for the 12 months to 1 March.

## IN BRIEF

### Johnson gets £367,000 in compensation

Peter Johnson, the former Redland director who joined rival building materials company Rugby Group last April, received £367,500 in compensation following the termination of his contract, according to Redland's annual accounts. Mr Johnson was hired to Rugby last year when he was appointed group chief executive following the retirement of Peter Carr. The accounts also reveal that Robert Napier, Redland's chief executive, received a total salary package of £435,146 in 1996. Rudolph Agnew, appointed chairman in May, receives a basic salary of £150,000. The compensation and salary details reflect a year when Redland's pre-exceptional pre-tax profits fell by 27 per cent to £260m. The total dividend was held at 16.67p.

### NovoPharm to market version of Zantac

Glaxo Wellcome has signed a licensing agreement to allow its rival NovoPharm to market a version of Zantac, Glaxo's ulcer treatment. NovoPharm would be able to market its treatment 16 days earlier than other manufacturers, a Glaxo spokesman said. In return, Glaxo will receive unspecified payments from NovoPharm. Glaxo is dropping plans to appeal against a court ruling which allowed NovoPharm to market its generic alternative to Zantac from mid-July. Glaxo shares dropped as low as 1,150p on the news before climbing back to 1,156p in early afternoon trade, down 9.5p on the day. In March it warned it faced two years after its patent on Zantac, its best-selling drug, expired in July.

### Shire to distribute inflammatory drug

Shire Pharmaceuticals is to distribute Hoechst Marion Roussel's Calceort drug in the UK for 10 years from 1 May, with an optional five-year extension. Calceort treats inflammatory conditions such as asthma and rheumatoid arthritis without the side-effects on bones usually associated with oral corticosteroids. The drug is already prescribed in European countries.

### Pre-tax profits double at Austin Reed

Austin Reed doubled pre-tax profits to £6.8m last year, on turnover up 7.5 per cent from £72.7m to £78.2m. Earnings per share climbed 7p to 14.2p. The company said retail businesses were the star turn of 1996, with turnover up 10 per cent, boosted by growth in its womenswear division. However, external manufacturing turnover fell from £13.7m to £13.5m, with operating profit falling £1.1m to £800,000. The company blamed slack demand in Europe and the increased strength of the pound. Colin Evans, chairman, said the company was continuing to reposition Austin Reed as the "modern British brand" and planned to increase its distribution of Austin Reed mens and womenswear in the UK this year.

### Snakeboard unlikely to meet forecasts

Snakeboard International said it was "extremely unlikely" it would meet the forecasts contained in the company's AIM admission document. The company said that following the announcement made on 11 March about its trading position, trading performance in February and March had continued to be substantially below expectations. The company's first interim report and business review will be published during the week starting 19 May.

## Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Austin Reed (P)	78.2m (72.7m)	6.77m (3.99m)	14.2p (7.2p)	6.5p (6p)
Betterware (P)	60.7m (54.0m)	11.5m (2.29m)	7.5p (5.3p)	12.83p
Imperial Chemical Industries (P)	13.6m (11.4m)	1.2m (1.01m)	9.47p (7.8p)	3.5p (3.4p)
NovoPharm (P)	43.0m (42.4m)	1.70m (1.53m)	13.6p (14.1p)	3p (2.5p)
NovoPharm (P)	448m (209m)	-0.94m (-0.72m)	-	-
NovoPharm (P)	1020m (1005m)	116.1m (115.0m)	14.2p (14.2p)	2.54p (2.54p)
NovoPharm (P)	40.4m (46.1m)	0.01m (4.75m)	14.43p (10.59p)	1.92p (2.44p)
NovoPharm (P)	96.7m (114m)	0.81m (-3.04m)	0.41p (-4.19p)	1.3p (1.3p)
NovoPharm (P)	2.4m (2.8m)	70.0m (220m)	4.7p (18.3p)	-
NovoPharm (P)	329m (387m)	16.2m (10.3m)	4.2p (2.97p)	1p (0.5p)
NovoPharm (P)	252m (208m)	17.4m (16.0m)	20.5p (20.5p)	8.5p (8.5p)
NovoPharm (P)	80.2m (28.8m)	3.05m (1.19m)	5.99p (4.79p)	-
NovoPharm (P)	-	10.5m (2.22m)	20.3p (8.5p)	8.5p (8.5p)

(P) - Profit (I) - Interest (U) - First quarter † special dividend of 9.51p also paid

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

## ICI fails to beat the ups and downs of the chemical cycle

Try as it might, ICI cannot seem to escape the rack of the chemicals cycle. It has spent the 1990s trying to exit commodity businesses and launched two big cost-cutting and productivity initiatives in an attempt to provide some insulation from the vagaries of the market. Yet first-quarter figures announced yesterday were again hammered by a familiar combination of currency effects and collapsing prices.

Pre-tax profits crashed from £223m to just £70m in the three months to March. The group said the strong pound shaved £40m off the bottom line while its "best guess estimate" for the full-year impact has been raised £30m or so to £120m since February. The news sent analysts' red pencils through profit forecasts yesterday, cutting them in the region of £100m to around £480m.

The worst damage came in the division most exposed to the cycle. Industrial chemicals dived into a £13m loss from profits of £87m in the same period of 1996 and £143m the year before. The plunge is perhaps not surprising, given a 58 per cent fall in polyester prices and 22 per cent slump in tioxide suffered up until earlier this year. It is ironic that volume growth in the upper teens for both chemicals has not been translated into better returns, but may augur for better times in the rest of the year, while prices are starting to move up again. If nothing else, the combination should provide a decent background for the flotation of the fluoride operation, pencilled in for late this year or early next.

Another disappointing area was the materials business, which sank from £61m to £24m. Profits in acrylics, the raw material used in some paints, plastic baths and similar products, held up well. However, the films and polyurethane businesses both wilted in the competitive heat and Asian over-capacity remains a problem.

Paint, which more than doubled its contribution to £30m, remains ICI's star operation. But Charles Miller Smith, the former Unilever manager who now sits in ICI's chief executive's chair, cannot rest his strategy of bringing the group closer to the consumer on this one division. Buying some

of the Unilever speciality chemicals operations recently put up for sale might help, but the group was keeping mum on that yesterday.

Yet ICI is too big and the pace of competition too relentless for it to escape the cycle completely. With £76m of savings achieved in these figures, it looks set to achieve the target of £400m benefits to the bottom line by the end of this year. But much of those will have to be given away to customers unless its rivals cut capacity more aggressively. So, even with the improving outlook, the shares at 700.5p, down 20p, look fully valued on a forward p/e of 19.

### Retail group still fragile

Betterware's management has worked hard to restore the catalogue retailing group's fragile reputation since 1993 when sentiment was hammered by ill-timed share sales by the controlling Cohen family. The shares have bounced from the low of 38.5p but two years ago, but even after a 7.5p rise to 119.5p yesterday, the recovery seems to have petered out over the past 12 months.

There is clearly plenty for the City to remain nervous about. The reputation of Andrew Cohen, chief executive, took a knock after the share sales. With 46 per cent

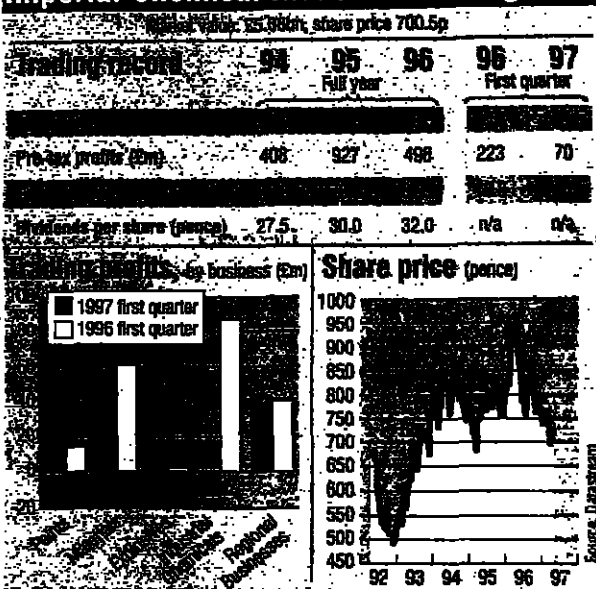
of the shares, his family is again set to be the chief beneficiary of the £9.8m to be paid out under the new special dividend proposals announced yesterday. Even coming so close to the possible election of a Labour government, Mr Cohen probably deserves the benefit of the doubt, given that the possibility of a special payment was mooted six months ago.

More pertinent is the underlying trading picture at Betterware, which yesterday reported a 24 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £11.5m for the year to 1 March. The figures are complicated by losses in the previous year on the former plastic moulding business and another VAT repayment, which garnered £1.25m in 1996/97.

But at the sales level, the company insists a slowdown in second-half growth in the UK from 16 per cent in the previous period to just 7 per cent last year is not to be taken as evidence of a maturing market. It remains confident it can achieve "high single-figure" growth over the next few years.

Even so, the real excitement must come from abroad. Europe could chip in £1m to profits this year, while the Latin American joint venture with Avon, which moves into Brazil next month, could be contributing at least that much by 1998/99. Flat profits of £11.5m in the current year would put the shares on a forward p/e of 16. High enough.

### Imperial Chemical Industries: At a glance



## Trinity untroubled by strong pound

Trinity Holdings, the specialist maker and exporter of buses, fire engines, dust carts and the like, says it has yet to be hit by the strength of sterling, despite 43 per cent of its sales going abroad. Exports soared 38 per cent in the year, helping total turnover to rise 26 per cent to £262m.

The rather slower growth in profit, up just 9 per cent to £17.4m, was blamed more on temporary difficulties within export markets themselves. Those affected bus body kit maker Duple Metsec and UMW-Dennis, the joint venture company in Malaysia. After allowing for the new shares issued to fund the acquisition of Douglas & Schopt in January last year, earnings per share were static at 20.6p.

But cash flow remains strong - the company had £8.2m in the bank at the end of the year - and the current order book is also at record levels. Trinity is market leader in the UK bus, fire engine and refuse-collection markets and after combining Douglas & Schopt with Re-

liance Mercury, has now added leadership in airport and dock-handling equipment.

Although capacity at Dennis Specialist Vehicles was increased by 30 per cent in 1995, demand for buses and coaches was so strong that a further increase in assembly facilities is needed this year. DSV has 41 per cent of the bus market and 15 per cent of the coach market in the UK.

Growth in the domestic coach market levelled off last year, but £70m worth of orders from Hong Kong provides a sizeable cushion. Cuts in fire service budgets reduced demand 30 per cent below normal levels last year, although there are signs of a recovery in 1997.

The shares fell 3.5p to 315p, putting them on a forward p/e of 14, if profit forecasts of £19.5m for this year are borne out. The continuing strength of sterling is the main obvious threat, but assuming it eases the shares still look good value.

## Branson attacks BA's control of Terminal 5

Randeep Ramesh  
Transport Correspondent

The tussle for Terminal 5 went public yesterday after Richard Branson, chairman of Virgin Atlantic Airways, attacked the decision to hand over the proposed £1.2bn development at Heathrow Airport to British Airways.

BAA, which runs Heathrow, ruled that Terminal 5 - which is the subject of a marathon public inquiry - would be used solely by BA and its alliance partners if and when it was built.

Mr Branson, who is leading the fight to stop BA's plans to link up with American Airlines, the carrier with the largest turnover in the world, said the move would give BA an unfair advantage over other airlines. "One has to ask whether this is a fair opportunity for customers to give a brand, spanking new facility to a monopolistic airline when all the carriers are paying for it," said Mr Branson, who

intends to take the matter up with the Office for Fair Trading and the European Commission. BAA says that its annual £1.6bn revenue stream comes from three principal sources. More than £500m of the company's cash flow is from its vast retail operations, another £434m comes from charging airlines landing fees and more than £200m is garnered from BAA's property portfolio.

Mr Branson's plea is also not an argument that BA accepts. Bob Ayling, BA's chief executive, said it had long been the airline's dream to offer customers "all of our services under one roof". "Today this dream moves one important step closer to reality," he said.

The company pointed out that it was also suffering from Heathrow's overcrowding. Recently, BA has moved its Latin American and Central African flights to Gatwick to free up slots at Heathrow. The deal is conditional on BA

leaving Heathrow's Terminal 1. Seen as a sop by other airlines, BAA is looking to hand over Terminal 1 to a mega-alliance of carriers including United, Lufthansa, SAS, Air Canada and Thai.

BAA's chief executive, Sir John Egan, said that BA's move was a key step in planning the Terminal 5 project. BAA said it would now discuss with other airlines just who should go where at the airport.

But Mr Branson said that BAA first floated the idea that BA might control Terminal 5 earlier this year. "When BAA told us that BA would have Terminal 5, we said that it was unacceptable without proper negotiations."

While all airlines and big business support Terminal 5, green groups and local councils oppose it. The public inquiry has run for nearly two years and will last for another 12 months. If planning permission is granted Terminal 5 could open in 2004.

## Brent Walker debates future of William Hill

Clifford German

Brent Walker, the debt-laden leisure group, is still considering whether to sell its William Hill betting business after reporting a group profit of £50.6m before tax and interest charges in 1996 compared with a loss of £41.4m the previous year.

William Hill has 1,700 betting shops and could be worth £500m. Its turnover rose 6.2 per cent last year while profits rose by 30 per cent to £50.3m. Trading since the beginning of the current year had been encouraging. Sir Brian Gosnell, chairman, said yesterday. The introduction of fruit machines and numbers betting had made a significant contribution but the betting services industry remained volatile, he said.

The options open to Brent Walker include floating William Hill on the market, reversing it into a shell company, finding a merger partner or looking for a trade sale. Bass, the brewers and hotels group that owns the Coral chain with 930 betting shops in the UK, is widely regarded as a potential buyer. Group turnover at Brent

Walker rose by 4 per cent to £1.73bn last year, on which the company made a profit of £116.5m before interest and tax. The results were helped by the sale of its Pubmaster chain of public houses for £171m last November and by settling the dispute over the value of the William Hill betting business it bought from Grand Metropolitan, the giant food and drinks group, in 1989.

Brent Walker received a net payment of £36m from the settlement with Grand Met. However, the dispute with Brent Walker's former chairman, George Walker, over the sale of its French vineyard in 1989 cost the group £3.28m.

Brent Walker still has debts of £1.5bn and interest charges cost £165.9m last year. The company's loan agreements with its bankers run out at the end of this year and the company must sell its remaining assets or renegotiate its debts. If it decides to retain William Hill, this would require the banks agreeing to extend the current facilities, Sir Brian said. The shares rose 0.75p yesterday to 2p.

## £50m to fix computers, says Abbey

The "millennium issue" could cost Abbey National more than £50m in adapting the group's computers and other technical systems, Ian Harley, finance director and the executive director in charge of information technology for the group, told the annual general meeting yesterday. "It could well cost more than that if it put together with the issue of converting for the euro."

Lord Tugendhat, chairman, said he was very much in favour of Britain playing a part in a single European currency. "The volatility of sterling is much greater than other European currencies."

Abbey National's share of the increase in UK new mortgage business has improved since the last quarter of 1996 but remains below its 14.7 per cent share of the market.

Lord Tugendhat said money continued to be tied up in the converting building societies, and Abbey's share of retail savings flows had been well below performance was better than last year.

He said Abbey National was now selling general insurance to all customers rather than just mortgage customers.

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# The home ownership boom is pushing up unemployment

Could the British love affair with home ownership be the chief culprit behind the upward trend in unemployment over the past few decades? It is a timely question just as the housing market appears to be teetering on the brink of another boom, and the answer appears to be yes.

New research\* by Professor Andrew Oswald at Warwick University, which he will present at the Department for Education and Employment after the election, suggests that the consequences for the jobs market of an upward trend in home ownership have been profound. Increasing owner-occupancy and declining private renting have been associated with an upward trend in unemployment. Private renters have a noticeably faster rate of movement out of unemployment into jobs.

Tenacious grinding is what it might be to admit it, there might have been a grain of truth in Norman Tebbit's "get on your bike" message - not that the government he belonged to did anything to make mobility any easier. Quite the reverse - extending home ownership was one of the icons of the Thatcher era. The expense and difficulty of selling a house and buying another is one of the things that prevents people who lose their jobs from moving on.

It makes sense to suppose that the markets for housing and for jobs are linked. The "structural" unemployment rate in a country, or the rate below which inflationary pressures will emerge, will depend on a whole range of factors that influence the costs of searching for work versus remaining unemployed. These include obvious things such as the level of benefit payments, but an unemployed person's job search outside a very restricted geographical area will also depend on how easy it is to move house. The fact that it is expensive and difficult to move means high unemployment rates in particular towns and areas.

Yet policies to reduce unemployment ignore the possibility that housing matters. We have had deregulation in the labour market and in product markets, but the housing market is more rigid than ever. Policy-

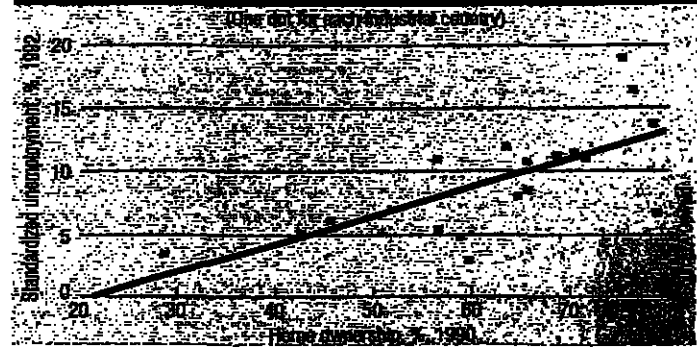


Diane Coyle

The difficulty of selling a house and buying another is one of the things that prevents people who lose their jobs from moving on

makers have also paid scant attention to the geographical distortion of the economy, despite the fact that the housing market boom is once again a South-eastern phenomenon. Southern house prices that are higher in every town will make mobility between jobs in different regions even less likely.

## Correlation between home-ownership and unemployment



The evidence Professor Oswald presents is compelling. He looks at patterns of unemployment and home ownership over time across countries, and across regions within countries. In all cases, the higher the rate of owner-occupancy, the higher the (male) unemployment rate. Thus high-unemployment Finland, Ireland and Switzerland have widespread owner-occupancy, while countries like Portugal and Spain, not to mention the US, where renting is far more the norm, have very low jobless rates. The housing market is better than alternative explanations like benefit rates at explaining the international pattern.

It is a pattern that holds over time, too. The bigger the increase in owner-occupancy, the bigger the rise in unemployment. A 10 percentage point rise in home ownership adds 1.5 to 2 percentage points of joblessness. In the UK, for example, the home-ownership trend cannot explain all of the trend rise in unemployment, but can account for the bulk of it. With a 30 percentage point rise in home ownership during the past few decades, it can explain around six additional percentage points on the unemployment rate. Even the oil price shock will lie behind the rest of the increase.

If his theory is correct, it has profound implications for economic policy. In 1950 only 29 per cent of families owned their own home. By the early 1990s the owner-occupancy rate had climbed to 70 per cent. The proportion renting privately

had declined from 53 per cent to less than 10 per cent.

Separate research\*\* fingers extensive home ownership as one of the reasons for the regional imbalances in the British economy. One of the driving forces of the late 1980s boom and subsequent bust was soaring house prices combined with equity withdrawal following the relaxation of mortgage controls. Housing wealth increased from £307bn in 1980 to more than £1,000bn by 1989.

The housing-driven boom was concentrated in the South-east and led to a widening of the north-south divide. This was amplified by cuts in the upper rate of income tax, which favoured the South-east because that is where most high earners live.

The author, Professor Chris Hannett of King's College, London, writes: "The boom of the late 1980s was not a national phenomenon but was in fact a boom in, and for, the South." This pattern is being repeated in the current housing and consumer boom.

The failure of economic policy to take account of the housing market will have serious repercussions for countries which join the single European currency. The main economic concern about EMU is whether some countries would tend to suffer persistent high unemployment if the possibility of a reduction in their exchange rate were removed. If the single currency does turn out to condemn some countries to higher-than-average joblessness, it will be important to devise ways of making it easier for people to move across national borders.

In Britain, housing policy must move up the agenda. It is unfinished business in the creation of a flexible and low-unemployment economy, and in the fair distribution of opportunities between the regions.

\*A conjecture on the explanation for high unemployment in the industrialised nations, A. Oswald, Warwick Economic Research Papers No. 475, Dec 1996.  
\*\*A Stroke of the Chancellor's Pen, by C. Hannett in 'Environment and Planning' 1997, vol 29 pp129-147.

# Top jobs at the end of the tunnel for Sir Alastair

PEOPLE & BUSINESS



In the market for a job: Former Eurotunnel head Sir Alastair Morton

Sir Alastair Morton is back from trekking around the Peloponnese for the last three months after giving up the mantle at Eurotunnel. He is in the market for a new job, and my informants tell me one of the securities being touted is chairman of Airbus, when the European aircraft maker converts to plc status in 1999. Other jobs with which Sir Alastair's name has been linked in headlines' parables include the Post Office, Cable & Wireless and BAA.

However, insiders say the favourite is still BG, the transmission business of British Gas, which was formerly called TransCo. Sadly Sir Alastair was not available for comment yesterday, since he has just jetted off to spend a month in his native South Africa.

Ernest Saunders of Guinness fame has been searching the City looking for a PR man to represent him, I hear, although without success thus far. Mr Saunders had been working as a consultant for David Elias, the publisher, in recent years, but the pair have parted ways and Mr Saunders is now flying solo. Any takers?

Which would you rather have done? Played drums for the Beatles or headed up a UK accountancy firm? David McDonnell, who has had his mandate as managing partner of Grant Thornton extended until 2001, nearly had the choice.

David had from Liverpool and went to Quarry Bank High School in the 1950s, when John Lennon was also a pupil. While at school young David played drums for a skiffle group which briefly included Lennon. Happily, or sadly, according to your taste - David left his rocking days behind and emerged as a leading bean-counter.

Speaking of accountants, nothing can stop the rise of Robert Smith. He is already the president of the Scottish Institute of Chartered Accountants, as well as the man chosen by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell to head up their asset management arm following the messy Peter Young debacle.

Yesterday Richard Cole-

Hamilton, chairman of Stakis, appointed Mr Smith to the board of the hotel group as a non-executive director. The ubiquitous Mr Smith, once 3i's youngest-ever manager, is also a non-exec at MFI Furniture Group. It seems everyone loves having a Scottish accountant.

Budgens, the supermarket group, is celebrating its 125th anniversary this week. The company released 1,250 balloons from its Maidenhead store yesterday to mark the occasion. Attending the bash was John Sugden, a great-grandson of Frederick Budgens, the Victorian entrepreneur who opened his first store in 1872 in Maidenhead.

This makes Budgens the second oldest supermarket group after Sainsbury's. Martin Hyson, Budgens' trading director and Gary Levy, chief executive of the Motor Neurone Disease Association were also there yesterday to send the balloons on their way. Budgens aims to raise £125,000 for the association through local fundraising events.

At the analysts' briefing for Laura Ashley's annual results yesterday, Anne Iverson, group chief

executive, was wearing a brown two-piece suit, to onlookers at least, appeared to be exactly the same outfit she wore at intervals six months ago.

Brown is the chosen fashion colour of the year, but consumers don't seem to be buying it. Witness Laura Ashley's stock levels, which rose 50 per cent in the year.

As one rather unkind analyst (male) said: "She could have picked out a little number from one of the shops and returned it this afternoon."

Marjorie Stimmel has finally tired of the world of Mammam after eight years at HSB Investment Bank as head of public affairs. Now she tells me she is off to take a place on a Sotheby's graduate programme in Asian art.

She writes: "Whatever you call it - downsizing or dematerialising - I have decided it is time for a change of direction for the remaining years of my working life, building on a lifelong interest."

Dematerialising? I sincerely hope we will be seeing more of Marjorie.

John Willcock

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.6933	6.6	24.21	1000	0.8924		
Canada	2.2642	61.56	170.162	13823	0.8028		
Germany	2.7324	70.43	207.36	1770	0.8030		
France	6.5522	222.13	675.41	170.84	32.50		
Italy	2.7761	26.43	71.94	265.335	735.335		
Japan	263.0	85.86	266.260	1261	54.53		
ECU	1.9337	24.21	71.94	13823	0.8028		
Belgium	5.7843	15.10	42.35	35444	20.17		
Denmark	10.534	250.180	770.810	63388	99.79		
Netherlands	3.1472	8.7	24.21	1000	0.8924		
Ireland	10.498	7.1	19.2	0.3797	0.4		
Norway	11.53	280.210	770.810	70732	105.49		
Spain	2.0633	222.13	675.41	170.84	32.50		
Sweden	2.4693	220.180	670.530	77669	41.18		
Switzerland	2.7324	70.43	207.36	1770	0.8030		
Australia	2.1092	2.4	6.4	1.262	1.4		
Hong Kong	10.534	250.180	770.810	63388	99.79		
Malaysia	2.0633	222.13	675.41	170.84	32.50		
New Zealand	2.5407	25.33	74.85	14448	26.19		
Saudi Arabia	6.0736	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Singapore	2.3486	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	12666	0.9998	Nigeria	138.755	85.3000
Australia	1.6933	10.534	Oman	0.2653	0.3620
Brazil	1.729	10.534	Pakistan	40.370	40.370
China	3.4840	8.248	Philippines	42.973	26.500
Egypt	5.5232	3.4009	Portugal	201.94	72.240
Finland	8.3263	3.4009	Romania	36.433	36.433
Greece	3.2266	32.600	Russia	90.4759	5.6000
India	43.379	272.50	South Africa	1.221	4.4450
Indonesia	2.0633	222.13	Taiwan	27.50	27.50
Kuwait	0.4945	0.0340	UAE	5.6754	5.6754

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate.  
Rate quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate.  
\*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.  
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 121 3033.  
Cable cost 50p per minute.

## Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	6.00%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.75%	Discount	0.50%
Intervention		Canada	4.50%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	2.50%
France	3.5%	Prime	4.75%	Fed Funds	5.25%	Central	3.00%
Italy		Discount	5.00%	Spain		Switzerland	
Discount	7.5%	Denmark		10-Day Repo	5.75%	Sweden	Discount
Netherlands		Discount	3.25%	Sweden		Discount	1.00%
Advances	2.70%			Repo (Avg)	4.0%	Lombard	4.25%

## Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	30yr	Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	30yr
UK	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	Netherlands	4.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%
US	6.5%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	Spain	7.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%
France	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	Italy	7.1%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%
Germany	10.0%	7.4%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	Belgium	9.0%	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%
Australia	6.0%	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%	Switzerland	13.0%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
Canada	4.7%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	4.2%	ECU	6.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%

## Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%
Banking CDs	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%
Local Authority Dps	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%
Discount Market Dps	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%
Treasury Bills (Buy)	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%
ECU Linked Dps	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%	5% 6%

## Tourist Rates

2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys	2 Buys
Australia (Dollars)	2.0300	France (Francs)	1.476	New Zealand (Dollars)	2.2800
Austria (Schillings)	13.7600	Germany (Marks)	2.710	Norway (Kroner)	10.8000
Belgium (Francs)	16.1500	Greece (Drachmas)	435.000	Portugal (Escudos)	270.0000
Canada (Dollars)	2.2250	Hong Kong (Dollars)	12.2500	Spain (Pesetas)	227.2500
Denmark (Kroner)	0.1600	India (Rupees)	1.0000	Sweden (Kronor)	13.2000
Finland (Markka)	10.4200	Indonesia (Rupiah)	2700.0000	Switzerland (Francs)	2.2000
France (Francs)	3.4000	Japan (Yen)	202.0000	Taiwan (New Dollars)	20.0000
Germany (Marks)	2.0000	Malaysia (Ringgits)	0.0000	United States (Dollars)	1.0000

## Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Open	Close
Long Oil (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
Short Oil (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
Long Gas (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
Short Gas (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
Long Euro (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
Short Euro (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
Long Gold (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
Short Gold (Jan 97)	108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1

## Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option

Settlement price: 4382	Call/Put	Total
4382	Call	4382
4382	Put	4382
4382	Call	4382
4382	Put	4382

## Energy

Brent Crude (Barrels)	WTI	Produce 1	Produce 2
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1

## Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Index	Value
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1
108.1	108.1	108.1	108.1

## Industrial Metals

	\$/tonne	Cash	- 3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks	chg
Aluminum Hg	1567.0-58		1568.0	68043	833175	- 1675
Aluminum Alloy	1480-83		1488.0-80	1958	707800	- 290
Copper A	2573.0-75		2571.0-73	36312	155775	- 2125
Lead	626.0-70		625.50-60	7146	107925	+ 400
Nickel	7345-55		7480.70	17322	51054	+ 1872
Th	885-58		8790-35	3369		- 130
Zinc	1255.0-58		1277.0-58	28294	436400	- 1650
Settlement Convention	£/\$		\$/DM	\$/¥	Stock volume & change in	

## Precious Metals

Precious Metals				Spex & Son			
pro fit/oz	\$	£	Coin	\$	£	\$	£
Platinum	374.50	239.55	Britannia	363	223	Kruggerands	340/352 208 216
Palladium	157.00	95.65	Britannia 5 oz	187	115	Sov	80/89 45 55
Silver spot	471.25	293.80	Britannia 25 oz	91	56	Nobles	374/390 230/240
Gold Bull	340.90	209.617	Britannia 10 oz	41	25	Maple Leaf	348/363 213/223

Agricultural				CMS	
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Potatoes	

## Agricultural

May	1023	May	1896	May	88.00	May	30.0	Vol.	
Oct	1043	May	1894	May	91.50	Jun	43.00	May	9.50
Sep	1063	May	1890	May	93.50	Jun	62.50	Jun	1.00
May	9130	May	7637	Vol.	8	Vol.	97	Vol.	27.40
White Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Corn			
LUFE	Shonne	LUFE	Skidder pt	LUFE	Shonne	CBOT			
May	314.80	Apr	1284	May	96.40		N-La	Cents/bushel	
Oct	306.40	May	1250	Jul	89.50			Sept	
Dec	28.00	May	1259	May	91.00				
				Jul			434-420	433.50	
							440-425	435	

## Other Softs

Other Softs							
Apr	Mexa (No.2)**	\$/tonne	108.75	May	Soye Oil	FL/100kg	108.50
May	Coza (N)	\$/tonne	140.0	Apr	Coconut Oil	(1) \$/tonne	725.00
May	Colson (W)	\$/tonne	70.66	Apr	Sunflower Oil	\$/tonne	und
unq	Wood	\$/tonne	und	May	Rapeseed Oil	FL/100kg	107.00
May	Rubber**	\$/tonne	280.50	Apr	Groundnut Oil	\$/tonne	970.00

## Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit Trust	Price	Unit Trust	Price
Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00	Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00
Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00	Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00
Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00	Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00
Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00	Admiral Fund Managers Ltd	1.00

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## sport

## Villeneuve backs return to 'real racetracks'

## Motor racing

DERICK ALLSOP  
reports from Imola

Springtime in Emilia Romagna: trees in blossom, a gentle sun caressing the hillside vineyards and the promise of the nation's finest pasta. For some, a definition of heaven.

For the Formula One fraternity, however, this corner of Italy will forever rekindle a vision of hell, and the adjournment of the Ayrton Senna trial, just down the road from the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari, cannot deflect from the conscience of the horrors of the San Marino Grand Prix three years ago. Another consequence is a circuit neutralised by a chicane at the point where the Brazilian was killed, and a backlash from drivers demanding a return to "real racetracks."

Chief among them is Jacques Villeneuve, the world champion, a man ever intent on saying what he thinks. Right now he thinks and says this circuit is boring, which is his impression of many circuits.

Furthermore, he reiterated here yesterday, that he thinks Formula One racing is becoming boring to the extent that he and others will seek fun, if not fortunes, in IndyCars.

The Canadian claims he speaks for others, as well as himself, when he denounced rule changes scheduled for next year, which include the introduction of narrower cars and grooved tyres, intended to bring down lap times and improve racing. Fewer and fewer, apparently, now have faith in that theory.

Villeneuve said: "The changes will only help the big teams with money to open the gap between themselves and the others. If it becomes boring to drive then the pinnacle could be IndyCars. The money will not be enough to keep me here for long. Other drivers, too, have said they are looking at the other side."

The Williams-Renault driver is perceived by some as a moaner, in which case he will be in good company while he remains in Formula One. Giancarlo Fisichella, a new boy at Jordan-Peugeot this season, made it plain yesterday he had no time for his team-mate, another new boy, Ralf Schumacher, after their dust-up in Argentina, where the German barged the Italian out of his way en route to third place.

Eddie Jordan, the team owner, has given the pair a lecture for the incident, but Fisichella said: "Our friendship is finished. I will always be correct on the track, and we'll work together on the car. But away from the track there will be nothing. We are not together."

Jordan may face the first test of his "team discipline" in Sunday's San Marino Grand Prix, when Fisichella's knowledge of the circuit may give him the edge over the ultra-combative Schumacher. Eddie Irvine would like to think he will discover on Sunday if the authorities are prepared to meet his request for a flag depicting a shamrock to be displayed on the podium in his honour. Better still, if they are prepared to play the non-sectarian Loudon Air to mark his victory. The Ulsterman stood beneath the Irish tricolour after taking second place in Buenos Aires and, as a result, his parents received threatening phone calls.

Irvine, who lives in the Republic and is licensed as a racing driver there, wants to avoid any implied commitment to either the tricolour or the Union flag, suggesting the shamrock symbol would be a politically and socially acceptable compromise.

He said: "It can be a help being Irish and British, and this has not caused me problems, but it has for my father and mother back home, and people who work for me. Politics should be kept out of sport."

## Seve set to make first cut of year

## Golf

ANDY FARRELL  
reports from Madrid

After coaching Tiger Woods to become the youngest and most comprehensive Masters champion ever, Butch Harmon did not have to look far for an encore. The man obviously likes a challenge. For his next trick, Seve Ballesteros may make his first cut this year.

Four under after 11 holes, Ballesteros could have done even better than his 70 in the first round of the Peugeot Spanish Open. He is four behind Germany's Alex Cejka, and the defending champion, Padraig Harrington, who has managed to bring the form from his maiden win as a rookie at Club de Campo a year ago to the tournament's new venue at La Moraleja II.

Ballesteros finished third here in the Old pro-am last October, an event won by his American counterpart as Ryder Cup captain, Tom Kite. But this year, the Spaniard's playing ration has been strictly limited to two days at a time. If that changes this weekend, it will have been built on the security of birdies at three of his first four holes yesterday.

It meant that a loss of concentration on the back nine was not disastrous. He left his recovery shot in a bunker at the short 13th and took three putts on the next. At 15, his eagle pitch tipped out, the birdie a formality, but a wild tee shot at the 17th cost another shot. Overall, Ballesteros was encouraged. "It is my best score and the best I have played this year," he said.

"I believe I played better than a 70, but the last six holes were a bit unsteady. I have been working with Butch at the Masters, at Santander last week and again here and I am very positive that things will change. I have won in the 70s, the 80s, the 90s and I will still be winning in 2000."

Strangely, Ballesteros denied that the world No 2, Greg Norman, was here because the Spaniard had agreed to play in Norman's tournament in Australia. "My manager Roddy Carr made the deal with Greg. Maybe Roddy will play in Australia," Seve said.

Norman shot a three-under 69, the same as his playing partner, Jose Maria Olazabal, who received Spain's highest sporting honour, the Gold Medal, on Monday night. On Wednesday, Norman had a bull dedicated to him at a bullfight but he declined the invitation to have a go himself. "I admire the courage of the matadors," the Shark said. "I wouldn't want to be in there doing that."

Cejka, who came home in 30, and Harrington, who made six birdies in eight holes from the fourth, led by one on 66 from club pro Gary Emerson and Mark James. The Ryder Cup veteran is another emerging from a spell where the only things wrong with his game were that he "putted poorly, thought poorly, swung poorly, had some bad luck and my chipping and sand play was not too good."

Fuzzy Zoeller has withdrawn from the Greater Greensboro tournament saying he could not continue playing competitively until he had apologised personally to Tiger Woods for racially insensitive remarks he made about the Masters champion.

## Courier thrown out of Monte Carlo Open

## Tennis

Jim Courier was disqualified from his doubles match at the Monte Carlo Open yesterday and will lose all his prize-money from the tournament.

Courier, twice a French and Australian Open champion, and his partner, Marc Rosset of Switzerland, were 4-1 down in the third set of their second-round match against the Argentinian Luis Lobo and Javier Sanchez of Spain, having taken the first set 6-3 but lost the second 6-2.

Courier was warned for an audible obscenity. He repeated it and the team lost a point. He then kicked the umpire's chair, constituting a third offence of unsportsmanlike conduct. His fine will be about £15,000.

Tim Henman is confident of being fit enough to return to action at the Italian Open, which starts on 12 May. Henman was forced to miss Britain's recent Davis Cup defeat by Zimbabwe because of an elbow injury.

Martina Hingis, the women's world No 1, left hospital yesterday after a 30-minute operation on Wednesday to repair the knee ligament she injured in a fall from a horse. She will be unable to resume full training for three weeks.

## The end of King Eric's reign is nigh

Glenn Moore on Manchester United's exit from Europe and its consequences

The verdict on Manchester United's tilt at European glory could be read in the stands on Wednesday night. In the closing moments of their 1-0 defeat by Borussia Dortmund, when it became obvious that they would not overturn the 2-0 aggregate deficit, United's followers passed judgement.

They had been deathly quiet for 20 minutes as chances came and went to the accompaniment of German drums. Now, as the dream of a place in the European Cup final disappeared, they stood, not to head for the exits, but to acclaim their team, and their conquerors.

Dortmund deserved the applause for their resilience and their opportunism. United deserved it for their efforts on the night and across the season. They had given Old Trafford more than they dared hope for in the autumn, after the trouncing in Turin and two humbling defeats at home.

The fans' view was reflected within the club. After the fallings of recent years, simply reaching the semi-finals was an achievement. United will recognise that, for all Alex Ferguson's public protestations, they were not good enough to go further. They have been beaten five times in the competition, including

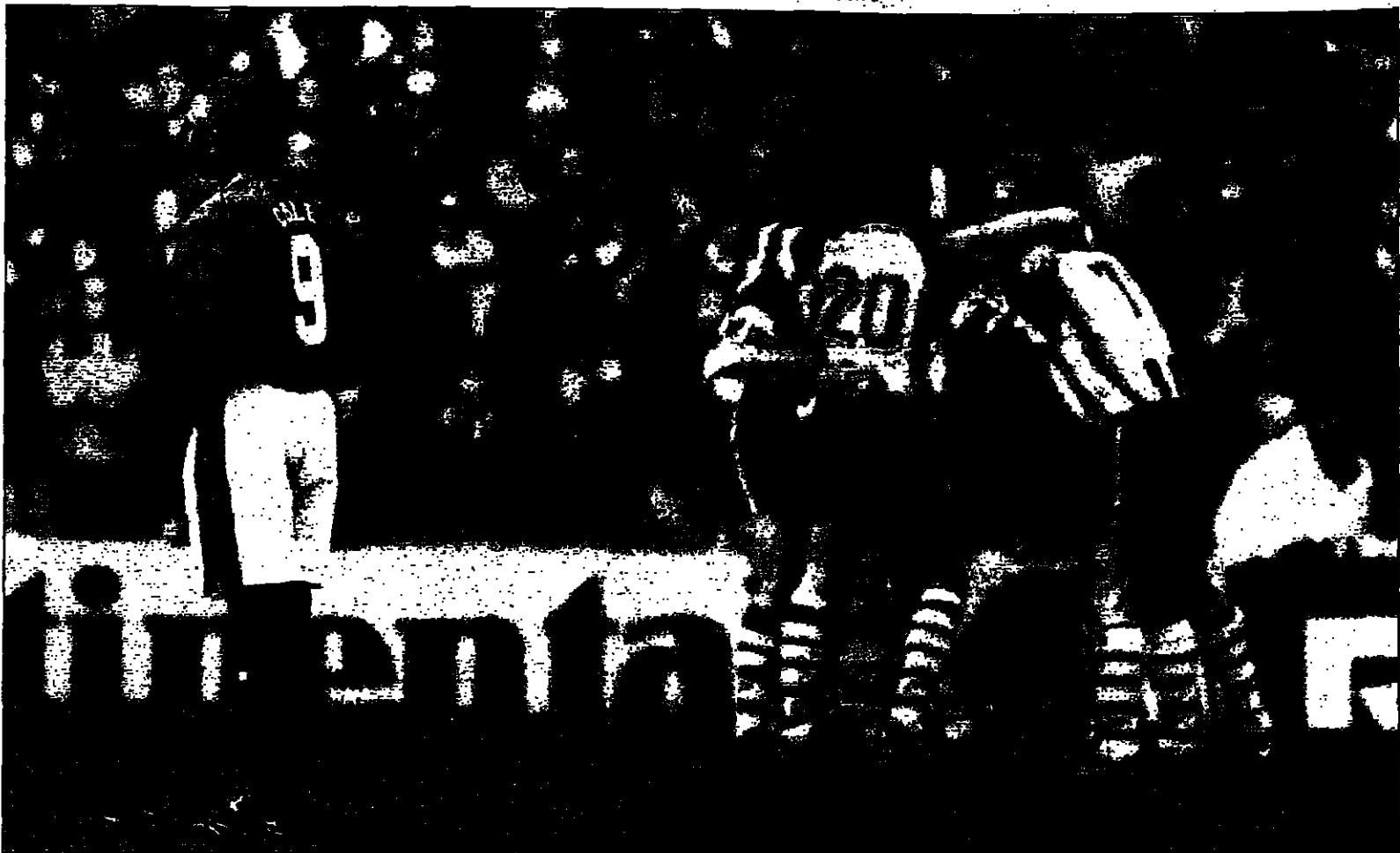
home and away by Dortmund and Juventus.

They are, however, good enough to compete with the best and are learning all the time. Some judicious summer investment and, next season, they could go that one step further.

The question exercising Alex Ferguson's mind this morning is where to improve and who to buy? When you are as good as United the number of players that can improve the team without disrupting the dressing-room and pay structure are rare.

It can be done. "Juventus won the Champions' League last year and they sold and bought," Ferguson said yesterday. They sold Fabrizio Ravanelli, Gianluca Vialli, Paulo Sousa and Pietro Vierchow among others. The players they brought in included Alan Boksic and Zinedine Zidane and the result is better than the original. It will be a surprise if Juventus do not retain their trophy in Munich on 28 May.

Karel Poborsky has been a disappointment, and United still need a wide right player to provide further options, including allowing David Beckham to play inside more often; they may need a defender to replace the injury-prone Gary



Andy Cole watches as Borussia Dortmund's players celebrate their goal at Old Trafford on Wednesday night

Photograph: David Ashdown

Pallister; and, most contentiously, they need a new striker or two. Andy Cole played well on Wednesday but his finishing continues to let him down. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has had a good season but is light-weight and still learning; Eric Cantona looked like a man whose time has passed.

Once again he failed to deliver when it mattered and, for the first time, there were stirrings of dissent among his followers. He has had a peripheral impact this season: he missed crucial chances in both legs against Dortmund and United

have played well without him, notably at Arsenal.

Possibilities are few. Davor Suker is regularly mentioned but one wonders how he would fit in the dressing-room, and he would not be a replacement for Cantona. No doubt Ferguson will soon be headed for Ringway Airport but one answer could be close to home. If Middlesbrough fail to survive, Juvenio may be looking for new employment.

United will need to be better next season as it will be harder to qualify. There are six groups of four and, as England are currently seventh in the rankings,

United might not be among the top seeds. With second-placed clubs also involved they could find themselves in a group with Juventus and Barcelona. Only the group winner qualifies automatically, the best two second-placed clubs joining them in the quarter-finals.

The competition begins early, far too early, on 23 July - the day before the fourth cricket Test. That round involves the champions of the minor nations, which will probably include Rangers.

This format may only last a season as Uefa, the governing

body of European football, acting on a proposal from Juventus, are planning further reform of their lucrative flagship. They are considering dispensing with two-legged semi-finals and playing a mini-tournament in late May with both semi-finals and the final played within a week in one country.

Brilliant, one might think. This would reduce fixture congestion by freeing two midweeks in April. However, anyone leaping to that conclusion has not studied Uefa's empire-building. The two extra midweeks would merely allow

the format to become four groups of six. It will simplify the process but the consequence would be more matches, not fewer. Annual income, already outstripping the World Cup finals at more than £100m, will also go up.

At least this year's late-May fixture bottleneck has been eased. Wednesday night's defeat means United's growing coterie of England players should now be (relatively) fresh for the 31 May World Cup tie in Poland and available for the warm-up match with South Africa at Old Trafford on 24 May.

## Graham chasing Fiorentina's Amoruso

ALAN NIXON

George Graham, the Leeds United manager, was in Florence last night watching Fiorentina's European Cup-Winners' Cup semi-final second leg against Barcelona and trying to sign the Italian club's £3m-rated central defender Lorenzo Amoruso.

Amoruso has played an integral part in the Italian club's European campaign and is rated one of the best uncapped defenders in Italy. He is reportedly interested in a move to England.

Graham plans to spend around £10m on new faces with five or six players joining his squad in the close season.

Graham has also made moves for Bolton's £3.2m-rated Alan Thompson, the Brentford striker

Carl Asaba, the Israeli forward Heim Revivo and the Rangers left-back Davie Robertson.

The Burnley manager, Adrian Heath, wants to sign the experienced midfielder Barry Horne from Birmingham as part of a swap for goalkeeper Marlon Beresford. The Welsh international has been told he can go by the Birmingham manager, Trevor Francis, who is in-

terested in Beresford with his current No 1 Ian Bennett stalling on signing a new deal.

The Portsmouth chairman, Terry Venables, who now owns a controlling interest in the club, will reveal plans for a new stadium for the First Division club today. The club hope to build a new home on a site yet to be decided, although a railway goods yard adjacent to

Fratton Park is the most likely option. Portsmouth will get £2m from the Football Trust if they can begin building before the end of this season.

Cesare Maldini yesterday added Roberto Baggio to the squad for Italy's home World Cup qualifier against Poland on Wednesday. Baggio, 30, who has 45 caps, last played for Italy in September 1995.

## Altrincham on the edge of precipice

Non-League notebook  
RUPERT METCALF

While Macclesfield Town prepare for the last push towards promotion to the Football League, their Cheshire rivals Altrincham can only look on in envy for the Moss Lane club are on the brink of relegation from the GM Vauxhall Conference.

Altrincham were founder members of the Conference (then called the Alliance Premier League) in 1979 and have not been relegated since then. They won the first two titles in 1980 and '81, and in the era before promotion and relegation, were desperately unlucky not to be voted in to the Football League.

Altrincham's manager, John King, and his assistant, Graham Heathcote, were both members of the team in those glory years, so they are suffering more than most people at the club now that the cheers have turned to tears. At the start of 1997 Altrincham were in what

seemed a comfortable mid-table position, but their form since then has been dreadful. They have not won for 15 games and are now bottom of the table, with just three games left to play.

After last weekend's 2-1 home defeat to Dover, who scored twice in the last seven minutes to seize the points, King said that all his players were "so down, so heartbroken". They will not be feeling much better if they lose to Kettering at Moss Lane tomorrow - such a result would confirm relegation if Welling get at least a point at home to Gateshead and/or Bath win at Hayes.

Bromsgrove Rovers will also be relegated if they lose at Macclesfield, who will secure the title if they win tomorrow and on Wednesday at Halifax in their penultimate fixture. Sammy McIlroy's side beat Woking 5-0 at Moss Rose on Tuesday, scoring four goals in four second-half minutes, to put promotion within their grasp.

## Burns stands firm despite Falkirk embarrassment

## Scottish football

The Celtic manager, Tommy Burns, was in a defiant mood yesterday, insisting he would not quit Parkhead after his side's shock Scottish Cup exit against Falkirk at Ibrox on Wednesday night.

Burns' future was immediately the subject of speculation after their 1-0 semi-final replay defeat at the end of a season which will almost certainly see rivals Rangers collect their ninth championship in a row.

Burns said: "I will not be resigning. I can either walk away or stay and try and change it. I

intend to stay and change it. I would be the first to admit I have made mistakes in the first three years I have been here but I also feel I have learned an enormous amount in that time and I intend to use that experience to the full in the future."

Celtic's managing director, Fergus McCann, said the club's overall "plan of action" had not changed. Chris Waddle is hoping Falkirk go on to lift the Scottish Cup following their shock semi-final victory over Celtic.

Waddle joined the Scottish First Division outfit last September on a match-by-match basis to help him build up his

fitness. And the 36-year-old former England winger, who made four appearances and scored on his debut against Clydebank, was delighted to hear that the Bairns had reached their first final in 40 years. "I'm very pleased for them," Waddle said. "It's a great achievement for them to beat Celtic and hopefully they can go on and win the cup."

Waddle joined Bradford after his brief stint in Scotland and is now back in the Premiership bidding to steer Sunderland clear of relegation. But he has happy memories of his brief spell in Scotland and wishes he could be

at Ibrox on 24 May for the final when Falkirk meet Kilmarnock.

"I go on holiday to America on the day of the final so I won't be able to go to it but I would definitely have gone otherwise," he said. "I might still be able to watch the game on satellite over there and it would be nice to see them win it."

"I was recovering from an injury at the time when I went up there. They did me a favour and I did them a favour. I enjoyed my time there and I still speak to people at the club. They're a great set of players there and the chairman [George Fultson] is a real character."

Falkirk were relegated from the Premier Division last year but Waddle is hoping a cup final victory will provide the impetus for a successful promotion campaign next season.

"For a club of their size they're ambitious, they've got plans for a new stadium and this [reaching the final] has come at a good time for them," Waddle added. "They've got a lot of experienced players and I believe they're good enough to play in the Premier Division."

"If they win the cup that might give them the push they need to go on and get promotion next season."

## Bath move for Regan

## Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWITT

Bristol's rapidly diminishing reputation as one of the cornerstones of English rugby could suffer another sickening blow before the end of the season if Mark Regan, their home-grown Lions hooker, agrees terms with neighbours Bath. Sources close to both clubs indicated yesterday that the Courage champions were fast closing in on the most improved front-row forward in Europe.

With Leicester emerging as favourites to secure the services of a second Bristol Lion, the lock Simon Shaw, fears of a new outbreak of asset-stripping at the Memorial Ground gathered pace. Unlike Regan, who has another year left to run on his contract and would therefore be the subject of a substantial transfer fee, Shaw becomes a free agent next month.

Both men will definitely leave Bristol if the worst comes to the worst and the club fails to survive next month's play-off double-header against either Coventry or, more likely, Bedford. Under those circumstances, they might well lose Martin Cory, their captain, into the bargain. His CV has been circulated to the richer and more secure top-flight clubs in recent weeks and a strong showing on this summer's England tour of Argentina could provoke a stampede for his services.

However, the West Countrymen are confident of retaining elite status and, in a declaration of serious intent, have successfully negotiated a new three-year deal with David Corkery, the Irish international flanker.

Andy Gomarsall has recovered from a groin infection and replaces Martyn Wood at scrum-half as Wasps attempt to tie up the championship at Northampton tomorrow.

## Holt's win fails to halt the rot

## Table tennis

Andrea Holt proved England's only winner as the women's team were beaten 3-1 by Lithuania in their opening match at the World Championships in Manchester yesterday.

This was a crucial Category One match for England, and one they had expected to win, but Lisa Lomas, playing in her eighth World Championship, was beaten in both her singles matches.

Lomas lost the opening match to Jolanta Prusiene after leading 20-18 in the second game. Holt then brought the scores level, by beating Ruta Garkauskaite, but the reigning England champion, Nicola Deaton, was narrowly defeated by Kristina Tuitaite before Lomas fell to Garkauskaite. Results, Digest, page 29

## Betts set for Wigan

## Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

The Great Britain forward Denis Betts is expected to rejoin Wigan on a four-year contract, now that he has confirmed he will return to England next year.

Betts said he was leaving the Auckland Warriors after three seasons for family reasons, but with some regrets. "After a trying time at the start, I'm enjoying myself now," he said.

His return to Britain, as a free agent, was bound to interest a number of clubs. Leeds expressed an interest, but said Betts appeared to be out of their price range. Wigan plan to announce his capture next month, before a shareholders' meeting at which a disgruntled group will try to vote the club's chairman, Jack Robinson, off the board.

The Wigan prop Terry O'Connor has said a fourth de-

feat this season would end the club's chances of winning the Super League. The Great Britain tourist could have a new front-row partner for tonight's game against his former club, Salford, Wigan having obtained a work permit for their recent signing from Widnes, Lee Hansen.

O'Connor, the Salford prop Cliff Eccles and the St Helens stand-off Tommy Martyn, are available for Ireland's game in France next month.

The Halifax prop Kevin Skerrett will be sidelined for at least six weeks after breaking his arm, while the utility back Asa Amone has sprung his right shoulder and is out of Halifax's Sunday visit to Oldham.

The Super League's bottom club, Castleford, whose new coach, Stuart Raper, arrived from Australia yesterday, will be without the winger, Chris Smith, for six weeks due to a knee injury.

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Fig. 6. The principles of Ball Juggling.

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## United we fall

Where now for the defeated Red Devils, asks Glenn Moore, page 28

# sport

**Spanish Open**  
Andy Farrell tracks the  
golfing elite, page 26

# Juninho wants Pele and Zico at Wembley

## Football

Juninho, the Brazilian who has done so much to get Middlesbrough to the FA Cup final, hopes to be watched at Wembley by two illustrious compatriots.

"Zico and Pele were great heroes for me and I want to invite them to come and watch me in the Cup final if it's possible," he said. "It would make it even more special for me to walk out at Wembley knowing they were there. It would be wonderful for me and also for Emerson."

Boro's opponents at Wembley, Chelsea, are hoping to add another expatriate to their burgeoning enclave. Earlier this week, Ruud Gullit signed the Nigerian defender Celestine Babayaro from Anderlecht, and he may add Gustavo Poyet, a Uruguayan international with dual Spanish nationality, to his foreign complement. The hard-working midfielder, who is just as comfortable in an attacking role, can leave Real Zaragoza on a "Bosman" free transfer.

Wimbledon have been warned that if they leave England, they are unlikely ever to

be allowed to compete in European club competition.

The club's owner, Sam Hamman, has not completely given up on the idea of moving the Selhurst Park tenants to Dublin, where the Irish would flock to watch Premiership football. The team still has an outside chance of competing in the Uefa Cup, and although Europe's governing body has yet to make an official ruling, they are reluctant to sanction an English club playing home games in a different country.

A Uefa spokesman, Fritz Ahlstrom, said that when

Galatasaray attracted massive crowds to games played in Germany when they were banned from playing at home, they to play other European games there but were not allowed to. "No decision has been made about Wimbledon if they were in Dublin but you can imagine that it would be the same reply as Galatasaray received," he said.

A Wimbledon spokesman said there was no point in commenting until Uefa had notified of any ruling regarding a move to Dublin. "Until then, we refuse to accept that the scheme is dead," he said.

Derby have escaped the possibility of having points deducted by the Premier League thanks to an observant supporter.

Jim Smith, the Derby manager, was in breach of regulations when he named four non-European Union players in his 16 to play in Wednesday's Premiership match against Nottingham Forest. Three can be selected and only the fact that the blunder was spotted by the fan minutes before the kick-off saved Derby from embarrassment and possible punishment. It meant Smith had to alter

his side and team sheet 15 minutes before the start, and he replaced his Estonian goalkeeper, Mart Poom, with Russell Hoult.

Smith admitted that it was only when a told the first-team coach, Steve McClaren, that he became aware of the blunder. "The referee [Graham Poll] said he would have to report us to the Premier League because we had given him the change on the team sheet after the permitted time but I don't think it will be a problem."

"I don't know who the supporter was but I'd like to thank him. It was a good job Russell

Hoult was ready and hadn't had a couple of pints after thinking he wasn't going to be involved."

The brewers Boddingtons had to pull the plug on an advertising campaign which congratulated Manchester United on winning their European Cup semi-final. So confident were they that United would win that they invested more than £40,000 in advertisements congratulating them, which would have appeared in newspapers yesterday morning.

Late-night telephone calls had to be made to have the adverts withdrawn after United's

defeat. The ads featured a pint of the beer, known as the "cream of Manchester", with a Dortmund pennant and the slogan "Creamed".

Bryan Hamilton is calling on young players after losing three more of his Northern Ireland squad for next Wednesday's Group Nine World Cup qualifier in Armenia. With five senior players unavailable, Hamilton has brought in Manchester City's teenage midfielder, Jeff Whitley, the Ipswich midfielder, Danny Soneer, and the teenage Wigan goalkeeper, Roy Carroll.

## England left with the crumbs at top table



Nicola Deaton, the reigning England champion, falls to a narrow defeat by the Lithuanian Kristina Totilaite on the opening day of the World Table Tennis Championships in Manchester's G-Mex Centre yesterday. It was a poor day for the

host nation's women's team, who lost their Category One match 3-1 before facing the stronger South Koreans. In Category Two, Scotland, Ireland and Wales all won their opening men's matches. Report, page 28; results, page 29. Photograph: Allsport

## Head blow ends Morris' career best

**Cricket round-up**  
ADAM SZRETER

The former Glamorgan captain Hugh Morris hit a career-best 233 against Warwickshire at Cardiff yesterday but was then taken to hospital after being struck by an Allan Donald bounce.

Morris ducked into a ball from the South African and immediately fell to the ground, but he was able to remove his helmet unaided before help arrived in the shape of the Glamorgan physiotherapist, Dean Conway, and his Warwickshire counterpart, Stewart Nottingham. Morris was carried from the field on a stretcher and he later described himself as being "just a bit dazed" but was taken to hospital for a precautionary X-ray.

Thanks largely to Morris, however, Glamorgan declared at 551 for 3, their highest score against Warwickshire, with a lead of 400 and with Warwickshire failing to claim a single bonus point in a properly contested first-innings sequence since the system was introduced in 1968.

Morris's 200 came in 529 minutes off 419 deliveries and included a six and 28 fours. He put on 242 for the third wicket with Adrian Dale, who made 106. Warwickshire finished the day on 15 for 1 needing a further 385 to avoid an innings defeat.

Neil Taylor marked his Sussex debut with a century as the hosts established the upper hand over Northamptonshire at Hove. Taylor's 127 helped Sussex, replying to Northamptonshire's 315, reach 344 for 6 and Keith Newell also played a major role compiling an undefeated 91.

Taylor's hundred made the 37-year-old former Kent captain the first Sussex player to score a century on his debut for 50 years. Hugh Bartlett achieved the feat against Cambridge University at Worthing. Earlier, Mark Robinson finished with 6 for 78 against his former club as Northamptonshire, resuming on 288 for 9, reached 315 to claim a third batting point.

At Old Trafford David Boon provided Durham's solitary resistance to frustrate Lancashire's attempt to enforce the follow-on. The Australian finished unbeaten on 85 to steer his side to 201 for 6 at the close, still seeking a further 156 to avoid the follow-on after ending Lancashire's innings on 506 earlier in the day. Mark Bowden produced a devastating morning burst to spark off a determined Nottinghamshire fightback against Worcestershire at Trent Bridge. The seamer claimed 4 for 17 in the space of 41 deliveries, including the vital wickets of Tim Curtis and Tom Moody, when Worcestershire seemed well placed to pile up a total in excess of 500.

The Nottinghamshire openers, Paul Pollard and Tim Robinson, continued the good work by laying the platform for a solid reply with a stand of 173, but the hosts finished the day on 196 for 3.

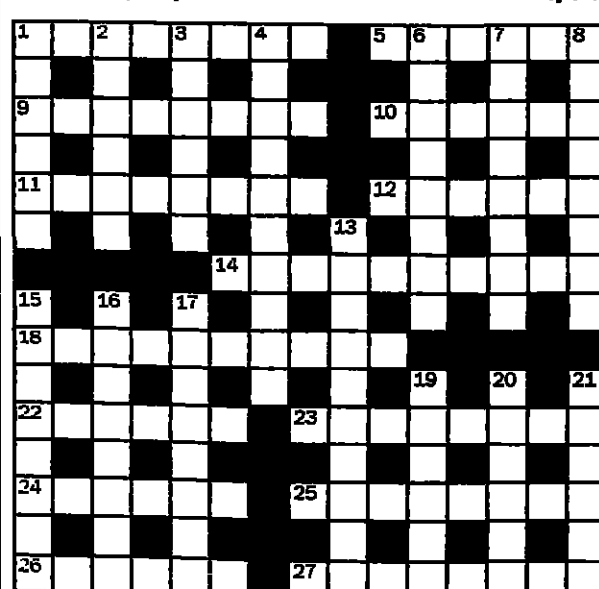
Yorkshire's batsmen again enjoyed themselves at The Parks on the second day of the match with Oxford University. After dismissing the Dark Blues for 114 to lead by 221, David Byas did not enforce the follow-on. His decision was vindicated by Michael Vaughan and Bradley Parker who put on 230 for the second wicket, each making centuries.

## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3282, Friday 25 April

By Phil

Monday's Solution



**MONDAY'S SOLUTION**  
ACROSS  
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- ACROSS**
- Instrument is confiscated by mum fairly promptly (8)
  - Civilised prohibition on entering river (6)
  - Getting on? Getting on without hesitation, on reflection (8)
  - It's left on board games (6)
  - and 12 Who'd produce a misplaced "I'd vet car brakes"? (4,4,6)
  - Has almost crashed in Verona, coming from German city (10)
  - Worthless type that is about to embrace unfashionable dress designer (10)
  - and 23 Receiving dues or laying out money? (6,3,5)
  - Be a success, I see, though dwelling in middle of garret (6)
- DOWN**
- Unwilling to accept a couple of books in a tatty state (6)
  - Travelling far, I see: Australia and another continent (6)
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## White the whirlwind running out of puff

**Snooker**  
GUY HODGSON

It was not difficult to envisage the passing of an era. The nation, or the snooker-watching part of it, has suffered with Jimmy White for so long that each April he is as much a part of the furniture as Dad's favourite chair. Old ladies see him as the lovable rascal, happy to overlook his indiscretions, boys of all ages empathise with a man whose free spirit refuses to be reined by conformity. Even his hair job, to hide a rapidly widening bald patch, was seen a welcome hint of vanity from someone whose appearance frequently reminded one of the face you see in the mirror the morning after the night before.

Jimmy, in snooker terms, means only one person: "the Whirlwind", whose failure to clinch the Embassy World Championship from six finals has made him the most popular player in the land. The country admires Stephen Hendry and Steve Davies; it adores White.

But maybe for not much longer. White, 34, went out of the World Championship just before midnight on Wednesday and into the limbo land known as outside the world's top 16. Next season his progress will be through a minefield of extra qualification matches. Young

players will be waiting to take pots at an erstwhile hero.

The words after his 10-9 defeat were familiar. "The reason I took up snooker was Jimmy," Anthony Hamilton, his conqueror, said. "I think I'd rather have beaten anyone but him." Almost everyone adheres to this ritual, except the sentiments, although genuinely felt, are coming more often these days. And earlier in tournaments.

White lost his first 11 matches this season and his earnings for 1996-97 are little more than £60,000, which represents a fortune for most but a severe decline of income for someone who has picked up £3.3m in his career. "He'll come straight back," Hamilton insisted. "He's different class."

Others are not so sure. White had been 5-1 and 8-4 in front against Hamilton and although he has been buried by an avalanche of lost frames before - most notably when he lost 10 in a row against Hendry in the 1992 world final - he has not surrendered such an advantage very often at the Crucible.

Certainly not as slowly. The last few frames were played at a ponderous pace, each shot weighed down with tension. Thirty-eight minutes for the 16th frame, 30 for the next, 44 and 28 for the final two.

In times gone by, White has rattled off four frames in the

time it was taking to complete one. The last was a particular agony, an amalgamation of missed pots and snookers. White was 37-1 up at one stage but succumbed to a break of 84. "I'm shocked," he said. "My form in practice could not have been better leading up to the championships and although I knew how good Anthony was I felt I had enough ammunition to see him off."

"I still love the game so there won't be panic stations. I'll have to cut my holidays short this year to get in some practice. I'll be back. I've had so much support from my fans over the years I owe it to them."

James Wattana, the 12th seed, had enough ammunition but was scraping around for shells before beating Graeme Dott in another final frame match. Ahead 6-2, the Thai lost all semblance of rhythm and one point trailed 8-7. "I got angry with myself for letting him off the hook," he said. "He played better than me but I was the lucky one."

Never more so than in the deciding frame when Dott, a 19-year-old Scot, potted a long red only for a double kiss to halt his progress. The white was nesting on a red in such a manner that neither the black or the pink were visible. Snookered, Dott lost his chance and Wattana sneaked through.

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